

An Exclusive Interview with

Adam Yahiye Gadahn

(may Allah have mercy on him)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

from the editor

Dear readers,

This exclusive issue of Resurgence brings to you an in-depth narration of the life story of a *Shaheed* whose quest for God, Allah the Almighty, started with *Shahadah*- the testimony of faith- and ended with the ultimate testimony written with his own blood.

The exemplary *Muhajir*, *Murabit* and Mujahid, Adam Yahiye Gadhan (Azzam al Amreeki) was martyred in an American air strike earlier this year. His martyrdom comes at a time when several leading figures in the Jihadi movement such as Shaykh Ibrahim al Rubaish, Shaykh Harith al Nadhari, Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Dagestani, Shaykh Nasr bin Ali al Anisi, Shaykh Majduddin Hamam al Misri and many others have fulfilled their oath to Allah, and by offering their blood in His path they have rekindled the love of martyrdom in our hearts as well. We ask Allah to accept each one of them, grant them the highest status in Paradise in the company of the Prophets, the truthful ones and the martyrs, give their families and relatives patience, and recompense their loss to the Muslim Ummah.

A few weeks before Shaykh Adam's martyrdom, *Ustadh* Ahmad Farooq (Raja Muhammad Salman, may Allah have mercy on him) was also martyred in an American drone strike, bringing to an honourable end his journey of Jihad spanning over a decade. His life and character were an inspiration for countless youth, many of whom were moved by his lectures to come to the lands of Jihad. While his martyrdom has surely grieved everyone who knew him personally or through his lectures and articles, it has equally increased our resolve to carry on the mission for which he has sacrificed his life. He was not merely one of our visionary leaders who had combined in his Jihad the sword and the pen, but also a close friend, a mentor, and a beacon of light for so many of us. In their arrogance, the Americans have overlooked the fact that it takes more than a missile to kill someone like Ahmad Farooq. Now that he has given eternal life to his words with his blood, he will live on to be a source of inspiration for others who will follow in his footsteps, *insha' Allah*.

We would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and companions in the Way of Allah. We ask Allah to accept him among the martyrs, raise his status in Paradise, reunite us in the Gardens of Eden, and give us the good fortune of avenging his martyrdom from the Americans and their Pakistani hirelings.

On this occasion, as we condole the loss of these invaluable leaders, let us not lose sight of the glad tidings of victory looming on the horizon: from Hadramaut, Shabwa, Abyan, Aden and Ma'arib in Yemen; Idlib, Dar'aa and al Jisr in Syria; to Herat, Farah, Helmand, Qandahar, Zabul, Ghazni and Kunduz in Afghanistan. Alhamdulillah, inspite of the martyrdom of its leadership, the Ummah's Jihad is moving forward at a pace which, to say the least, is unsettling for the disbelieving world.

Among those present at the site of the drone strike which targeted the Deputy Ameer of Al Qa'eda in the Subcontinent were two Western nationals who became targets of the American policy of political assassinations and extra-judicial killings: Dr. Weinstein and the Italian national Mr. Lo Porto. By intentionally killing its own citizen (Dr. Weinstein), the American government has once again proved itself to be a stubborn and arrogant enemy of Islam which prefers the assassination of its citizen to the release of a single innocent Muslim woman being unjustly held in American captivity: Dr. Aafia Siddiqui. The American government should be under no illusions that its attempts to conveniently brush aside the plight of Muslim prisoners like Shaykh Omar Abdul Rahman, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, and



Shaykh Ibrahim al Rubaish
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Ustadh Ahmad Farooq
(Raja M Salman, may Allah have mercy on him)



Shaykh Harith al Nadhari
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Shaykh Nasr bin Ali al Anisi
(may Allah have mercy on him)

countless Mujahideen being held in Guantanamo and the black sites of CIA will pass without notice. As long as the Crusader West in the leadership of America persists in its hegemonic policies vis à vis the Muslim World, more American and European citizens will have to pay the price of Western crimes.

We would like to avail this opportunity to tell the families of Dr. Weinstein and Lo Porto that since 2012, Jama'ah Qa'edatul Jihad [Al Qa'eda] had persisted in its attempt to arrive at a quid pro quo (for the release of our prisoners held by the American government), but these efforts were met with a stubborn refusal on the part of the Obama administration to even consider the possibility of negotiations on their freedom. Not only is Obama responsible for the politically motivated killings of Dr. Weinstein and Lo Porto, he is also deceiving his nation by claiming that this was 'accidental'. We don't have any doubt that the criminal silence of the American government regarding Dr. Weinstein and its refusal to negotiate the terms of his release were motivated by the desire to see him dead, even if this should necessitate an 'inadvertent' drone strike which could be used to explain away his killing as a 'tragic accident'.

We would also like to tell their families that during their stay in the Pak-Afghan border region, the Organization [Al Qa'eda] treated them decently, in keeping with the Islamic injunctions on fair treatment of prisoners. Special attention was paid to Dr. Weinstein's health, and it was made sure that he is able to maintain his elaborate diet regimen[1] even in the midst of unrelenting bombing raids and artillery shelling by America's frontline ally. He had been provided with books, a laptop, access to news and the like. For the entire duration of his stay, Dr. Weinstein was not once shackled or kept behind bars, but was allowed to interact with the brothers who would stay with him, something which left a deep impression on him. Lo Porto was similarly given a decent treatment, a far cry from the ordeal our prisoners have to go through on a daily basis at Guantanamo and the dungeons of the CIA. This is because our war is not for oil or imperial interests which necessitate extraordinary renditions, black sites, Guantanamos and Abu Ghuraibs; it is for the sake of a divine message that we believe in from the very depths of our hearts; a message which becomes a practical reality in even the minutest aspects of our dealings with others.

There are certain other interesting facts regarding Dr. Weinstein and Lo Porto which will be revealed in an exclusive release, Allah-willing.

Moving on to the martyrdom of someone particularly close to our hearts, as we offer our congratulations to the Muslim Ummah on Adam Yahiye Gadhan (may Allah

[1] To cite just one small example of the decent treatment Dr. Weinstein received: In view of his age, he was regularly provided with the sumptuous diet regimen he was used to, which included, among other things, Salmon on a daily basis! For the sake of Allah's pleasure alone, the Jama'ah [Al Qa'eda] provided him with the best possible medical treatment available in the circumstances. This may sound strange to some of our readers, but because of his heart condition and old age, the Jama'ah [Al Qa'eda] would spend an average of eighty (80) thousand rupees a month on his medicines and dietary requirements, while the brothers living with him in the same place lived on a budget of three-four thousand rupees per head [which is the normal average expenditure of a Mujahid in Al Qa'eda]. It is hard, if not preposterous, to imagine a prison of the Americans or their apostate allies where the captives would get to eat better food and receive better medical care than their captors! All praise belongs to Allah who guided us to the light of Islam and saved us from the ignorance and oppression that Disbelief brings with it.

have mercy on him) attaining the ultimate success that each one of us aspires to achieve, we would like to emphasize that his martyrdom has once again demonstrated the difference between our leadership and the leadership of the enemies of Islam. While our leaders give life to their words with their blood and die honourable deaths in the prime of their lives while fighting on the frontlines of this decisive battle for the future of the Muslim Ummah, the effeminate *leaders* of the disbelievers and their cronies sit back in the illusive comfort and safety of the White House, the Ten Downing Street or the innumerable Green and Red Zones dotting the capitals of occupied Muslims lands, only to die in the end slow and miserable deaths in otherwise comfy settings. This, then, is the difference between the worshippers of Allah and the worshippers of matter; between the Ummah that has unwavering faith in the Oneness of God and the nation of *Shirk* (polytheism) and Disbelief.

Combined in the personality of Shaykh Adam Gadhan[2] (may Allah have mercy on him) were several remarkable facets. First, he was a revert from Christianity to Islam. As is mentioned in a *saheeh hadeeth*, anyone who believes in the prophethood of the Prophet Musa (Moses, peace be upon him) or the Prophet Eesa (Jesus, peace be upon him), and then by accepting Islam also believes in the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will receive a double reward from Allah.[3] Second, he made *hijrah*[4] (emigration) from *Daarul Kufr* to *Daarul Islam*. Third, after becoming Muslim he lived most of his life as a *Murabit* and an active caller to Allah. Fourth, he was martyred at the hands of the People of the Book (Judeo-Christians in this case), and according to another hadeeth, a Muslim who is martyred by the People of the Book (Jews or Christians) will receive the reward of two martyrs. [5]

He was at once a veteran Mujahid, a student of knowledge, an eloquent orator, a producer and director of Jihadi media productions, a strategist and visionary. But inspite of his dynamic personality, he was humble, down-to-earth and God-fearing, and had none of the vanity associated with people in the media's limelight. His constructive outlook on life, positive thinking, determination in the face of adversity and resourcefulness in the most challenging circumstances were an inspiration to everyone who knew him closely. He exemplified the kind of patience and persistence that Ribaat and Jihad demand in this critical stage of the war between Islam and Kufr [Unbelief].

An instructive aspect of his personality was his balanced approach to dealing with the practical challenges faced in Jihad. Likewise, the deep respect in which he held the righteous scholars of our age[6] and his aversion for extremism in matters of religion were qualities one could not fail to appreciate. He would never tire of warning the brothers against the disastrous consequences of *Kharji'ism* for the Jihadi project of the Ummah. He had a profound and contemplative nature, with a strong dislike for superficiality. In him one could discern the sagacity of the Believer described in this *hadeeth*, "Guard yourself against a Believer's insight, for he sees with

[2] It is worth mentioning that out of respect, we would prefer to address him as 'Shaykh', only to invite strong objections from him to the use of this title. I remember the last time I addressed him as Shaykh, I received this strong rebuttal *"Lastu bi shaykh, ana faqat akhukum"*...(I'm **not** a Shaykh, I'm only your brother). After his martyrdom, I believe I reserve the right to give him the respect that he had always deserved.

[3] Saheeh Bukhari, Vol 1, Hadeeth No.97 (Agreed Upon).

[4] Migration for the cause of Islam.

[5] Sunan Abu Dawood, Vol 2, Hadeeth No. 723

[6] This was most evident in his respect for the scholars who have played a leading role in Jihad, such as Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, Shaykh Attiya, Shaykh Abu Yahya, Shaykh Abu Qatada, Shaykh Khalid al Hasenan, Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi and Shaykh Mansoor al Shami to name a few. He also had great reverence for callers to Allah like Shaykh Ahmad al Ashoosh and Dr. Ayad Qunaibi.



His constructive outlook on life, positive thinking, and determination in the face of adversity were an inspiration to everyone who knew him closely.



the light of Allah."[7]

Shaykh Adam's outstanding contribution to Jihadi media, particularly as-Sahab, was undoubtedly one of the major achievements of his life. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that he was a one-man media team; script-writing, recording, translating, dubbing, editing, and producing speeches and documentaries on his own. His ability to improvise and make the best of available resources was remarkable. In recent years, his access to the internet, television or newspapers had become limited, and he had been forced to rely mainly on his radio for keeping himself abreast of developments all across the world. Inspite of these constraints, he would always come across as someone deeply involved in the events unfolding in the different theatres of Jihad. His ability to converse fluently in three languages (Arabic, English, Farsi) and clearly understand two other (Pashto and Urdu) greatly helped him develop this exceptional grasp of the intricacies of global and regional politics. For an immigrant (*Muhajir*), his deep cultural and political understanding of the region, his respect for other *madhahib*[8] (specially his respect for the *Hanafi madh'hab*) and appreciation of cultural sensitivities were striking to say the least.

It is narrated on account of 'Ubada bin As-Samit (R.A): "We gave the oath of allegiance to Allah's Apostle that… we would stand firm for the truth or say the truth wherever we might be, and in the Way of Allah we would not be afraid of the blame of the blamers."[9] It is narrated in another *hadeeth* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, "Which Jihad is better?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered, "The word of truth spoken in front of an oppressive ruler."[10] Adam Yahiye Gadhan (may Allah have mercy on him) was the thirteenth person and the first Muslim in the history of the United States to be indicted for treason. His crime was none other than speaking the word of truth in the face of the American Empire of Evil. We believe that by sacrificing his life in defense of the Muslim Ummah, he has given a powerful rebuttal to his detractors. And on the Day of Judgment he will *insha' Allah* be raised not just as a *Shaheed* in his own right, but also a *Shaheed* (witness) against his own nation, which responded to his sincere invitation to God with its characteristic disdain, as in the story of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him) mentioned in the Quran: "Then the only answer his people gave was to say, 'Kill him or burn him'." (Al Ankaboot: 24)

We ask Allah to grant him the highest stations in Paradise and give us the good fortune of avenging his martyrdom. We leave you with this thought-provoking interview of the *Shaheed* held late last year, which would later prove to be his last release. It covers a wide range of issues, beginning with the story of his upbringing and reversion to Islam and ending with his insights on the challenges faced by Muslims and Mujahideen in the different theatres of Jihad from North Africa to the Subcontinent, with a detailed analysis of the various dimensions of the conflict in Syria and its implications for the Islamic world.

Wassalam,

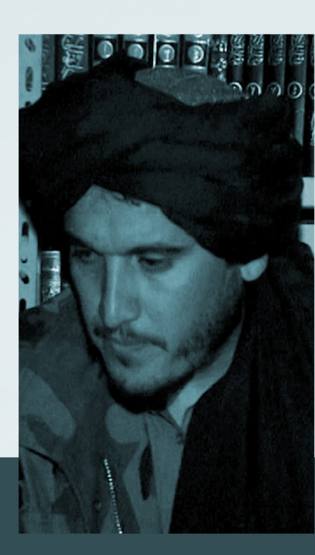
Hassaan Yusuf

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[7] Tirmidhi, Vol 2, Hadeeth No. 1071
[8] School of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence)
[9] Saheeh Bukhari, Vol 3, Hadeeth No. 2080
[10] Sunan an Nisai, Vol 3, Hadeeth No. 513







In this interview ADAM tells Resurgence

- **Targeting India will remain one of the Mujahideen's priorities as long as it pursues its antagonistic policies and continues to engage in and condone the persecution, murder and rape of Muslims and occupation of their land**
- **The way forward for our persecuted brothers in Bangladesh is Da'wah and Jihad**
- **The Pakistani regime bears responsibility for the toppling of the Islamic Emirate and the occupation of Afghanistan, and its crimes are continuing unabated**
- **While in Pakistan, I and my brothers were blessed with numerous supporters who sheltered and took care of us despite the risk**
- **The Americans and their Pakistani agents almost captured me in Karachi on at least two occasions**
- **Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi had the qualities of a great leader and a smile which could illuminate a city**
- **The Americans came close to martyring Shaykh Abu Mus'ab (may Allah have mercy on him) in Afghanistan, but Allah preserved him until he became America's number one enemy in Iraq**
- **Shaykh Abu Mus'ab was a champion of unity who fought for the Ummah, and he should not be held responsible for the deviation today of some people who falsely claim to follow him and his methodology**
- **A Muslim's blood is sacred, more sacred even than the Ka'aba, and spilling it without right is not only an act of oppression, it is the greatest sin after Kufr and Shirk**
- **The blessed raids of September 11th rubbed America's nose in the dirt and debunked the myth of its invincibility**
- **Brother Hani Hanjour asked me about security on American domestic flights in 1999**
- **Allegations of the un-Islamic character and behavior of the heroes of September 11th is part of a conspiracy to confuse and mislead Muslims**
- **Prophetic visions increased before major operations like September 11th and the USS Cole attack, leading Shaykh Usama to forbid the brothers to talk about their dreams**
- **The objective of the new Crusade against Iraq and Syria is to reestablish Crusader control of the region under the pretext of combating a particular faction**







"I eventually came to the conclusion that Islam was the truth and that Muhammad—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Prophets"

Adam Yahiye Gadahn



- **If the Crusaders decide to change their ways, then we have absolutely no interest whatsoever in prolonging the war for so much as another minute**
- **The Jihad against the regime in Damascus remains the most important battle for the Muslim Ummah in decades, and we must refocus our efforts on supporting our brothers in Syria in their heroic and fateful struggle**
- **The Nusra Front is an integral part of the blessed Syrian revolution**
- **Any attempt to differentiate between the Syrian and non-Syrian Mujahideen or drive a wedge between them is doomed to failure**
- **Cultivating and preserving a base of popular support is essential for the success of our Jihad**
- **Actual combat is only a small part of Jihad; most of the Mujahid's time is taken up by Ribaat, which has a huge reward**
- **The Islamic Emirate is poised to return to power—soon, Allah willing—and its return will reverberate around the region**
- **Mujahideen everywhere should benefit from the Afghan experience and the examples set by the Islamic Emirate**
- **The liberation of al-Aqsa Masjid is getting closer with each passing day and each new victory**

Resurgence: First of all, we would like to learn about your family background and the early years of your life.

Adam: In the name of Allah, and all praise is due to Allah, and peace and prayers be upon the Messenger of Allah and upon all his Family and Companions.

Before I begin, I would like to congratulate you on the founding of Qa'eda al-Jihad Organization in the Indian Subcontinent, as well the founding of Resurgence Magazine. May Allah bless your efforts, and may He make al-Qa'eda in the Subcontinent and Resurgence play major roles in the empowerment of Muslims and the restoration of the *Khilaafah* (Caliphate); and I would also like to extend my thanks to you for picking me to be the subject of your first interview.

Now, about the background of my family: like many or most Americans, I come from a family of diverse descent. My paternal grandfather's parents were Ashkenazi Jews who immigrated to Brooklyn, New York from the Lithuania/Poland region. His wife—my paternal grandmother—was a Protestant Christian woman from West Virginia whose family—the Christians—has been in America since revolutionary times and which, like many prominent Western European families, traces its ancestry back to people like Charlemagne and William the Conqueror.

On my mother's side, the family is—if my memory serves me right—of German Catholic descent, like many people in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey region where they lived.

My father's parents moved from the East Coast to southern California before he was born, and that's where he grew up, and where he was introduced to my mother who was staying with relatives in the area.

Soon after meeting—about two weeks later, if I'm not mistaken—my parents married. Shortly thereafter, they moved to the neighboring state of Oregon, and it was there that I was born—on September 1st, 1978—in a small trailer in the woods near the town of Port Orford.

Soon after my birth, the government forced my family off the land my father had purchased in order to make way for a national park or nature reserve, and so we moved back to southern California, where my father bought 60 acres in an area which at the time was undeveloped, sparsely populated, and relatively far away from the suburban sprawl. I think we were only the second or third family to take up residence there. This rural ranch is where I grew up, as the eldest of four children. I have two sisters and a brother (the youngest of the four).

Resurgence: How would you describe the early years of your life?

Adam: Hmm…I would say that they were rather idyllic, occasionally boring—or perhaps *often* boring is the right way to put it—and probably a bit unusual for the place and time I grew up in. As I said, it was a very rural area, and we had no AC electricity, nor gas supply, nor even any toilets. We didn't even have a telephone for the first ten years. The same thing goes for television. I think I was about 11 or 12 when one of our relatives gave us a small 3 or 4 inch black and white TV which we ran for a couple of hours each day off the three solar panels we used for lighting and powering small appliances like radios and cassette and CD players.

Resurgence: So you obviously didn't have air conditioning, then?

Adam: Obviously! During the summer we had to sweat it out, while in the winter we would warm ourselves around the wood stove on which my mother would cook our food. That was during the day and in the early evening, but at bedtime we had to make do with several layers of blankets and quilts. Perhaps I should mention here that we lived in a small four-room house which my father designed and built himself from scratch, adding new rooms as the family grew larger; and the walls of our house were built entirely out of a single layer of wood planks with gaps in between most planks due to shrinkage, and obviously such a setup doesn't offer much protection against the wind and cold, keeping in mind that temperatures in our area would regularly drop below freezing during the winter months. But on the plus side, a house built out of wood doesn't retain much heat, which was helpful during summers where the temperature could reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 degrees Celsius).

Resurgence: Was this rough, "off-the-grid" way of life someone your parents chose, or was it something they were forced into by circumstances?

Adam: I think it was a personal choice for the most part, whether born out of a desire to be different or out of a dislike of Western consumer culture and a wish to live a simpler life, although to be honest, I'm not quite certain on what basis they chose which amenities and conveniences of modern life to abandon and which to keep, because there were

numerous concessions made to modernity. For example, while we didn't have AC power or toilets, we had several automobiles, in addition to the technology which I mentioned earlier and other things I haven't mentioned.

Resurgence: We've heard that you did not attend school or any other formal educational institution. Is this true, and if so, why did your parents prefer homeschooling?

Adam: Yes, I never went to school, whether public (state-funded) or private. I think there were probably a number of reasons my parents didn't send me or any of my siblings to school.

Like many parents who school their children at home, I think my parents did so because they didn't want to entrust other people with their children's intellectual development and physical well-being.

There is no doubting the facts that schools—particularly American public schools—are one of the leading causes of the corruption of children's minds, values, morals, manners and health. Atheism, godlessness, sex, drugs, petty and violent crime, disease, junk food: you name the vice, you'll find it at school and be taught all about it, whether by your fellow students or by those tasked with educating you.

Don't forget, it's the American school system which considers pizza to be a vegetable, men and apes to be descended from a common ancestor, and sex outside marriage to be OK as long as it's "safe"!

So protecting us from such evils and negative influences is probably the main reason my parents didn't send me or my siblings to school.

Another, secondary reason was purely logistical: namely, to avoid the hassle of getting us kids to school and back home again 5 days a week for 20 or more years, keeping in mind that just to get to the school bus stop required a 15 minute drive down a rutted and bumpy dirt road. Of course there were other parents in our neighborhood willing to go through that hassle in order to give their children a regime-sponsored education, but not mine.

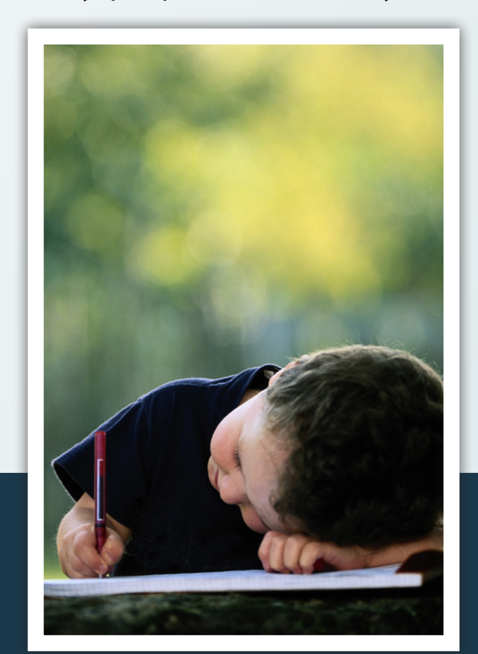
Resurgence: A lot of brothers believe that the modern/formal educational system is designed to rob the youth of aggressive purpose in their life and keep them preoccupied with career-making. In the light of your personal experience of being homeschooled, do you share this view?

Adam: This question is probably better suited for someone who has himself experienced the system in question, rather than one who has not gone through it personally; but in any case, it's clear to me that modern educational systems as a rule tend to program impressionable children and mold them from an early age in a way which serves the purposes and interests of those who run these systems, which in most cases are the secular governments of the world, or non-governmental organizations with agendas that are not in conformity with Islamic teachings and values.

These educational systems and institutions don't merely impart knowledge and teach sciences to their students, they also train and discipline them, and the least that can be said about the training and discipline offered by most of these systems is that it is extremely poor, if not rotten to the core.

I also think that these systems discourage independent thinking and promote conformity and "groupthink".

Not only that, they can be tremendous waste of people's time. You know, many people spend more than a quarter of an average lifespan in formal educational institutions, from kindergarten to university. That's a lot of time, especially when you consider that there are scores of people who go through the entire process and still end up failures in their personal and professional lives. I think a lot of the time wasted at school could be better spent doing more productive things for one's self, family, people or community.



Modern educational systems as a rule tend to program impressionable children and mold them from an early age in a way which serves the purposes and interests of those who run these systems

Obviously, some form of educational system is a must, because there are professions which are indispensible to any society, like physicians and engineers and so on, and obviously these sorts of professions require years of study and practice under the tutelage of experienced and professional teachers, so I'm in no way advocating a ban on schools, but the fact is, some of what schools and colleges offer today as subjects and majors can only be described as frivolous at best.

That's a general critique of the state of the educational systems; meanwhile, from an Islamic point of view, I think that educational systems in the Muslim world, like many aspects of our societies today, are in need of major reform and restructuring to bring them into conformance with Islamic laws and principles and with the needs of the Ummah, because it's a historical fact that most of these systems (like many aspects of our societies today) were introduced during the colonial era under the supervision of the European Crusader occupiers, who first uprooted the traditional Muslim educational systems and then replaced them with the current systems in order to serve their own devilish interests. And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: What is your advice to parents who send their children every morning to join this rat race called school? Are there realistic alternatives that we should be exploring as Muslims?

Adam: Hmm…in terms of advice to parents, I think the question anyone who chooses to send his children to school should ask himself is this: do you know who is teaching your children and what it is they're teaching them? And do you know who your children's school friends are and how they occupy their spare time?

Ask yourself this: if you had a neighbor with a poorly-behaved, bad-mannered, troublesome and undisciplined kid, would you allow your children to spend large amounts of time every day with that kid without your being present and supervising them? I'm guessing your answer would be "No way," right? If so, then why are you prepared to send your children to a school where they will every day spend hours of time outside of your supervision with hundreds of other kids, including dozens just like that brat next door - if not worse?!

Something to think about, isn't it?

In terms of alternatives to the schools, I can't really give a one-size-fits-all blanket prescription for everyone. Each family has to make their own decision in light of their own circumstances and capabilities and the alternatives available to them. One option worth considering is for a number of families in a single locality to form homeschooling support groups designed to help and support themselves and each other in the education of their children at home. If that's not practical or feasible for a particular family or individual, then I think that sending one's children to an Islamic Madrassah which (at the very least) is known to have an acceptable atmosphere in terms of *Tarbiyyah* (discipline) is preferable to sending them to a secular school. The important thing is that we prioritize Islam and preservation of our children's religion and values above all other considerations, and not allow our children's education to come at the expense of Islam.

Meanwhile, we should all do our best to work for the establishment of the Islamic system and government in our countries, because it is only with such a government in place that we as an Ummah will be able to implement the reforms our educational systems and other basic elements of society so badly need.

Resurgence: May Allah guide us all to work for the betterment of our Ummah and the victory of Islam. Let's resume the story of your life. Did religion play any role in your upbringing?

Adam: If you mean religion as in "organized religion" and regular attendance of mosque or church or temple or synagogue, not really, but if you mean religion as in holding of certain beliefs and (occasional) observance of certain rituals, then yes, I guess religion did play a part, and maybe we will go into this in more detail over the course of the interview.

Resurgence: What were your main interests as a teenager? Was there anything different about you in the prime of your youth?

Adam: I think I've only just reached the prime of my youth! But seriously, I don't think I was

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that different as a teenager. I might have been shyer and more reserved than many, with fewer friends, not only because I didn't attend school, but also because our neighborhood was—as I mentioned—sparsely populated, and so there weren't many families with boys my age.

As for my interests, they were probably typical of many teenagers: books, music, the media, and so on.

Resurgence: When did you first feel that there was a void in your life? What motivated you to explore religion to fill this void?

Adam: I can't pinpoint the exact date, but it was probably a short time before I moved out of my parents' home and started living with my grandparents in the city of Santa Ana, which is the seat of Orange County, California. I was probably 15 or 16 at the time. And momentum really picked up after I moved. I think the change of setting helped to fan the fire of exploration, a fire whose flames in turn were fed by the facilities and resources available at my grandparent's house which weren't available at the ranch, like the Internet and my grandparents' substantial library of books on all sorts of subjects, including religion; not to mention the public library and bookshops which were just a short bicycle ride away.

As for *why* I started to explore religion, I think it was because I had always believed in God as the Creator and Lawgiver, yet had no connection with Him in terms of prayer or any other form of worship. For me, it was mere belief in His existence without action and without really understanding what He wants of His creation. So I started to study religion to find out how to worship God and obey Him.

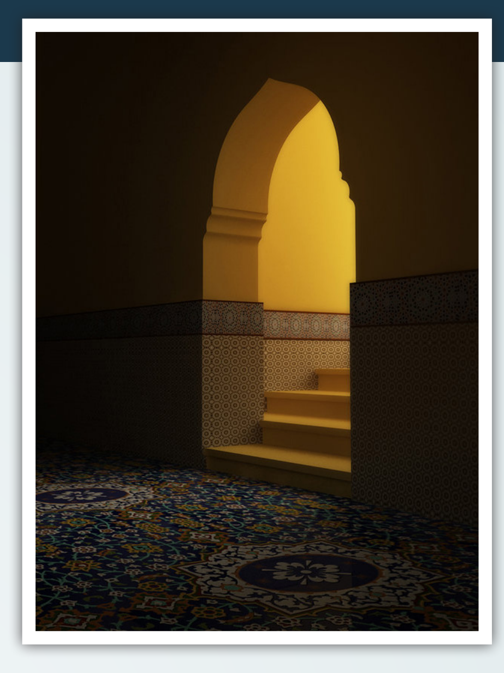
Resurgence: Initially, where did your quest for truth lead you?

Adam: Probably to Christianity, because it is the predominant religion in America and thus—I guess—the natural first choice for anyone interested in religion. And it was also the religion with which I was most acquainted in the later years of my childhood and early teens, to the extent that if you had asked me about my religion at the time I would have told you I was a Christian, despite the major issues I had with the religion and its adherents.

Resurgence: As you say, you had some major issues with Christianity. What was it precisely that turned you off the most?

Adam: A number of things turned me off to Christianity after study and reflection.

First, the numerous errors, contradictions, distortions, alterations and even blatant insertions found in the text of the Bible—the book of the Christians—even though it is supposed to be divinely inspired from Genesis to Revelation, not to mention the fact that the original manuscripts are lost to history, and that all we have to go on are copies made centuries later. While there is no doubting the fact that the Torah and Gospel were both revealed by God (in fact, this is a fundamental of our Islamic faith), the best that can be said about what is known as the Bible is that it contains fragments of the original revelations interspersed with the work of men. This fundamental flaw of the Christian religion (i.e. the lack of an accurate and reliable source text) is exacerbated, emphasized and accentuated by the (often willful) ignorance of many of Christianity's leaders and followers—if not all of them—about what the Bible



actually does say, and their attributing things to it that are not part of the original Gospel and denying the presence of things that are.

Second, the fact that Christians pray to Jesus—peace be upon him—and not to God, although Jesus clearly forbade his disciples to worship him and commanded them to worship God in heaven, something recorded not only in the Qur'an, but even in the adulterated and altered Gospel.

Third, their belief in the non-Biblical concept of Trinity, which even they admit is incomprehensible, yet consider to be a central tenet of their religion.

Fourth, their belief that Jesus died for the sins of mankind and thereby freed them from the constraints of Divine Law, which is another illogical concept with built-in contradictions.

There are a number of other major weaknesses and flaws I noticed in Christianity, but these are probably the most prominent, or at least the ones that come to mind right now.

Resurgence: When was the first time that you heard or read about Islam?

Adam: The answer to this question is not as simple as one might

imagine. As I mentioned earlier, religion did play a part in my life growing up, but the question is, what sort of religion?

The fact is, my parents, especially my father, had before my birth adopted a sort of syncretic, home-made religion in which they mixed aspects of Islam, Christianity and Judaism like one mixes fruits, vegetables and toppings at a salad bar. At first the Islamic flavor was dominant, but as time went on it faded and the Christian aspect became more prominent.

In any case, my father had sometime before I was born started calling himself Saif-ud-deen and my mother started calling herself 'A'isha, and he changed his family name from "Pearlman" to "Gadahn" or alternatively "Gadaan", which—as I understand it—is derived from the Arabic word for "tomorrow" [غداً *ghadan*], regardless of the explanation someone in my family gave to the media about it being related to the biblical figure Gideon; and when I was born, I was given the name Yahiye. A more precise and phonetic spelling would be "Yahya", but my father spelled it with an "e" so that it wouldn't be taken to be a feminine name by readers of English.

And perhaps I should point out here that "Adam" is a name I chose myself when I was about 6 years old following repeated merciless teasing from other children about my strange and unpronounceable birth name!

Among the aspects of Islam my father practiced on and off in the early years of my childhood was the Islamic prayer and fasting in Ramadan. I have a distinct memory of my father praying as Muslims pray, but to the southeast and not the northeast as most Muslims in America pray. I also remember trying to fast once in Ramadan, but as I was very young and it was a long, hot summer day, I broke my fast around noon.

Another area in which we resembled Muslims was in not eating pork or any non-*Halaal* or non-Kosher meat. In fact, my father raised goats on our ranch and used to slaughter them according to the Islamic method and sell the meat to a Pakistani-run meat market in Los Angeles.

Resurgence: After reading this, some might say that if your names were Arabic-Islamic, your father used to pray and fast, and your food was Halal, then your family was actually Muslim!

Adam: At first glance, yes, but on closer inspection it becomes clear that such a conclusion is highly debatable for the following reasons:

First and most importantly, whenever my father would be asked about his religion—especially by non-Muslims or when filling out forms—he would never say he was a Muslim. Instead, he would either avoid answering the question or give a strange answer, like identifying himself as a "Sabian" [صابئي], because according to him, no one quite knows exactly what a Sabian is. In other words, he didn't want to be categorized as belonging to any particular religion. I also remember reading an interview with him about ten years ago in which he was quoted as identifying himself and his family as being "Unitarian Christians."

Second, it was the Bible that we as children were encouraged to read and not the Quran, which was placed on a high shelf which we couldn't reach.

Third, I don't ever remember hearing or being told as a child that we were Muslims.

Fourth, when I told my father that I had become a Muslim, he didn't react by saying—for example—"But you—or we—were already Muslim!"

Resurgence: What was his reaction, then?

Adam: I seem to recall that his first reaction was one of surprise; then, a few days later, I remember that he gave me two books as gifts.

One of them was the unabridged version of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's Qur'an translation and commentary[1], which—by the way—was the same translation of the Qur'an which my father kept on that high shelf.

So my father went out and bought for me a copy of this translation from the *masjid* bookshop.

As for the second book my father gave me, it was a book from his library which he had had for quite a while. I think it was either *The Sufis* or *The Way Of The Sufi* by someone

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[1] **Adam adds:** Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872-1953) was an Anglicized Dawoodi Bohri (Ismailite Shi'ite) from India whose translation and commentary is full of errors and heresies common to Batinis, rationalists and Westernized Muslims, like his claiming that the description of Paradise and Hellfire in the Qur'an is mere allegory, and that Jews and Christians and followers of other religions are deserving of salvation even if they do not follow our Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) after hearing about him; and perhaps because of this, Ali's translation is one of the most popular translations of the Qur'an in the West and elsewhere, which is regrettable.
That's why I would like to warn my brothers and sisters against any printing of the Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation which includes the full commentary and all the appendixes and notes. As for the revised version which was published in Saudi Arabia after first being reviewed by a panel of scholars, it's a little better because it's been purged of all of the appendixes, much of the commentary and most of the footnotes, and thus is free of most of the heresies and mistakes which are found in the original, but I think the translation of the verses is still wanting in terms of both style as well as accuracy.



called Idries Shah[2], which consisted primarily of brief outlines of the ideas and beliefs (as conceived of and portrayed by Shah) of the famous Sufi saints like al-Junaid al-Baghdadi, Shaykh 'Abdul Qaadir al-Jilaani and al-Imam al-Ghazaali (may Allah have mercy on them all) as well as others; and my father commented positively on the ideas contained in this book. This and the fact that he also commented negatively on the collections of *Hadith* like Sahih al-Bukhari leads me to believe that he shared some beliefs not just with the "Sufism" of Idries Shah, but also with the Quranist sect—the "Qur'an-only" people.

In any case, if he had been a Muslim once upon a time, he no longer seemed to be one by the time I became Muslim. I think I asked him once during a discussion—or a debate—about the way I understood and practiced Islam, "Didn't you used to be Muslim?" as sort of a challenge to him, and I think his reply was something like, "I was a Muslim, but not a Muslim like you." Again, a rather ambiguous reply which suggested that he no longer wanted to identify himself as a Muslim, if he ever did in the first place. And the quote attributed to him in the media about he and his family being Unitarian Christians seems to bear this out. And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: What about your mother? What were her beliefs like?

Adam: I think my mother was even less inclined towards Islam than my father and more drawn towards Christianity. I remember she used to take us to the gatherings and activities organized by the local homeschooling support group, and these gatherings were as a rule overtly religious since almost all the homeschoolers in the area were observant Christians, mainly Pentecostals[3]. She would occasionally also take us to some of the churches attended by the neighbors, and I remember that I, on at least one occasion, participated in a Christmas Nativity play put on by some church group, although in general our family didn't celebrate Christmas, nor any other holiday for that matter. So it seems my mother was more inclined towards Christianity.

Resurgence: Why—in your view—did your parents and particularly your father take this mix-and-match approach to religion?

Adam: I think it has something to do (at least partially) with the generation to which my father belonged and the counterculture movement of the 60s and 70s which produced the hippies and their ilk and which was known for its dislike for—among other aspects of the predominant culture—organized religion, which led to the spawning of a number of what are called "new religious

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[2] **Adam adds:** Idries Shah (1924-1996) was a noted charlatan much loved and admired in the West for taking the Islam and even the religion out of Sufism and turning it into a "a secular, individualistic form of spiritual wisdom," [Wikipedia] thereby tailoring it to Western tastes and inclinations which would be naturally attracted to "a 'Sufism' without self-sacrifice, without self-transcendence, without the aspiration of gnosis, without tradition, without the Prophet, without the Qur'an, without Islam, and without God" [James Moore]!
Shah, by the way, proudly claimed to be the descendant of the notorious Afghan warlord Jan-Fishan Khan (Sayyid Muhammad Shah), who fought on behalf of the British occupiers and their puppet Shah Shuja in the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842), and then—after fleeing from Afghanistan along with his British masters—went on to help the British crush the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Unsurprisingly, Idries Shah considered this traitor to be a great Sufi!
Shah was also the grandson of the last Nawab of Sardhana in Uttar Pradesh state, Sayed Amjad Ali Shah, who was given the title of Nawab by the British in appreciation of the services rendered to them years before by his grandfather Jan-Fishan Khan.

[3] Pentecostal: "Of, relating to, or constituting any of various Christian religious bodies that emphasize individual experiences of grace, spiritual gifts (as glossolalia and faith healing), expressive worship, and evangelism." (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary).
"(In Christian use) emphasizing baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by 'speaking in tongues', prophecy, healing, and exorcism." (Concise Oxford English Dictionary).

movements" which drew on elements of so-called "Eastern" religions and philosophies like Islam and Sufism as a form of rebellion against the status quo. I think my father shared many of the ideas and values of that movement (minus the debauched lifestyle of many of its adherents, I hasten to add); and he had an obvious dislike for most types of institutions and organizations.

Resurgence: Let's resume the story of your search for truth. Before beginning to study Islam, what was your general impression about Islam and Muslims?

Adam: I had known Muslims from an early age, as my parents were friends with several Muslim families, among them Arabs, Pakistanis and Americans. I remembered them as being nice people and in no way the heartless fiends the American media makes Muslims out to be. But these people were only around during the first few years of my life and they had all faded away by the mid-to-late eighties.

As far as my impression or knowledge of Islam was concerned, it was extremely vague. All I had probably read about Islam was some children's books about the beginning of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which we had been given—if my memory serves me right—by the man who ran the *Halaal* meat shop which my father used to sell to; a man called Sattar, who—by the way—I happened to meet unexpectedly a couple years after becoming Muslim. I recognized him and introduced myself to him, and he remembered me and my father well; it was quite a happy reunion.

I eventually came to the conclusion that Islam was the truth and that Muhammad—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Prophets.

But in general I didn't have much to go on in regarding Islam.

Resurgence: So how and when did you revert to Islam?

Adam: As I said, I had access to a lot of sources of information while living with my grandparents, and while using these sources to study and compare religions, I eventually came to the conclusion that Islam was the truth and that Muhammad—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Prophets and his message the culmination of the messages of all the Messengers sent before him.

Resurgence: Can you describe the exact moment when you came to the realization that you had finally discovered the truth you had been searching for all along?

Adam: Again, it's difficult for me to pinpoint these turning points, but I do remember reading some works of *Da'wah* on the Internet which really helped to convince me, which dealt with topics like the irrationality and baseless nature of Christian doctrines and the errors and contradictions of the Bible (which fit in with what I already knew), the rationality and simplicity of Islamic faith and tenets, and the scientific miracles of the Qur'an[4].

I must have read some of Ahmad Deedat's booklets as well; and I also remember in particular finding on the Internet a lengthy and detailed book on Biblical prophecies about Muhammad—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—by someone named Mish'al; this book had a great effect on me, and I think it wasn't long after that that I declared the *Shahaadah* (testimony of faith).

Resurgence: And how did you go about doing that?

Adam: Strictly speaking, one

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[4] **Adam adds:** I know there are those who have their reservations about this field of study (scientific miracles or scientific exegesis of the Qur'an), and I agree that some of the claims some put forward about certain Ayahs or Hadeeths being fulfilled, explained or backed up by modern science are farfetched at best or outright distortions at worst, but all the same I think that it's important not to ignore or abandon this topic altogether—on the condition that those who speak or write about it have sufficient knowledge of both the Shari'ah sciences as well as the natural sciences, and aren't speaking from a defeatist perspective—because there is a need for discussion of the Qur'an and modern science, particularly when engaged in *da'wah* directed at Westerners, who have been led by the prevailing culture of secularism, agnosticism and materialism to believe that all religions are incompatible with modern scientific discoveries. At the very least, it should be made clear that the Qur'an—unlike the Bible—doesn't contain anything which can't be reconciled with proven and tangible scientific facts, as opposed to scientific theories which are open to debate and revision. And Allah knows best.

becomes a Muslim by pronouncing the *Shahaadah* even if there is no one around to hear you; announcing it publicly is not a precondition for your Islam to be correct and for you to be considered a Muslim in the eyes of God. Islam isn't like the manmade and adulterated religions which have elaborate and formal initiation ceremonies presided over by priests and rabbis. Therefore, as soon as one comes to the realization that Islam is the truth and all other religions today are either false or abrogated, he must declare right then and there that there is no God worthy of worship but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God (from the bottom of his heart and with full conviction, and preferably in Arabic too if possible), because death can come suddenly and unexpectedly and one never knows when his time might come; and then after that, he is obligated to start discharging his Islamic duties as they come along; and it is recommended that he go and find some Muslims so they can teach him about his religion and so that he can be identified as a Muslim.

So that would have been the ideal way for me to go about becoming a Muslim. However, due to my ignorance, or perhaps due to some mistaken information I had read, I thought that I had to go to a mosque or Islamic center so that the people there could make me a Muslim. In fact, I might have even thought that I should first learn and master performance of the *Salaat* (obligatory prayer) and other obligations before becoming Muslim, which is ridiculous of course. But the problem was, I didn't know where the nearest Islamic center was, and my shyness—or my *shaitaan*!—prevented me from picking up the phone, dialing the number in the directory and asking for directions!

So this state of limbo and indecision continued for a couple of weeks until I asked directions from someone I thought would know: my father. And that's how I found out how to get to the Islamic Society of Orange County in Garden Grove, which was about an hour's bike ride from where I lived.

Resurgence: So you finally went to the Islamic center; then what happened?

Adam: My *shaitaan* went into overdrive! As soon as I reached the center and saw all the people coming out of the *masjid*—it was a Jumu'ah and the prayers had just finished—I got cold feet and turned away and rode back home without setting foot inside the gates of the center or talking to anyone! However, 5 days later, on a Wednesday, I summoned up the courage to return, and so I walked into the office of the Islamic center's director and told his secretary that I wanted to become Muslim. But instead of having me declare the *Shahaadah* then and there, he told me to come back on Friday so I could declare the *Shahaadah* in front of the Jumu'ah congregation! One more point for the *shaitaan*! But *alhamdu-lillah*, the *shaitaan* eventually lost the round, as I returned two days later to declare the *Shahaadah* both on paper and in front of the congregation.

Resurgence: You've already mentioned your father's reaction to your reversion, but generally speaking, how did your family and friends react to your reversion? Was the initial period after your reversion tough for you, or did you find support among the Muslim community?

“The main challenge I faced after embracing Islam was the challenge any observant Muslim in the West faces: how to survive and remain a Muslim in a culture diametrically opposed to the values, tenets and regulations of your religion... Another issue I faced was the doubts and misconceptions raised by enemies of Islam like Orientalists and Christian missionaries, polemicists and apologists.”



I’d like to invite my family to Islam, the only religion acceptable to God, and the only way to salvation in the Hereafter.

Adam: In general, my family are a tolerant and open-minded lot, and their reaction reflected that non-confrontational approach. Some of them explained away my adoption of Islam and the unusual clothes I was wearing as being no more than an adolescent stage I would soon grow out of, and they said as much openly.

Other than the occasional animated debate on matters of religion, there were no particular difficulties worth mentioning between me and my family. The only real argument I can remember is when I decided I wanted to move out of my grandparents’ house to live closer to the *masjid*, which my parents objected to because I was only 17 years old and thus not yet of legal age which meant my parents were legally responsible for me and my actions. So they put their foot down against me moving out, and when I insisted, I seem to recall they reminded me of how Islam enjoins obedience to parents!

And then there was the time my grandfather asked me to take some cans of beer out of the cupboard for some guests and I refused, which angered him. But other than that there were no real problems with my family.

As for my friends…well, as I said earlier, I didn’t really have many friends or much of a social life before Islam, so that wasn’t really an issue; my only acquaintances outside the family were several pen-pals with whom I shared musical interests and whom I would occasionally talk with over the phone.

The main challenge I faced after embracing Islam was the challenge any observant Muslim in the West faces: how to survive and remain a Muslim in a culture diametrically opposed to the values, tenets and regulations of your religion, a culture for which Haraam is Halaal and Halaal is Haraam and where your own faith and identity is backwardness and terrorism and everything else is progress and light.

Another issue I faced was the doubts and misconceptions raised by enemies of Islam like Orientalists and Christian missionaries, polemicists and apologists. There was a period there when some of their arguments weighed heavily on me, but thanks to God I was able to find strong and detailed rebuttals on the Internet which exposed the egregious errors and fallacies and outright lies of which these forgers and hypocrites are guilty.

Resurgence: Can you recommend any particular website which might be of interest to those searching for such rebuttals?

Adam: One of the outstanding sites I came across during my research is a site called Islamic Awareness (www.islamic-awareness.org), which specializes in educated, erudite and thorough refutations of some of the most prominent of the myths, arguments and misconceptions put forward by the Christian missionaries and Orientalists. May Allah reward those behind the site for their efforts and grant them continued success in this important endeavor. But I hasten to add an important disclaimer, which is that this website and those behind it have nothing to do with al-Qa’eda, lest my recommendation be misinterpreted by hostile forces as evidence of organizational or ideological links.

Resurgence: Before we move on, is there any message you’d like to give to your parents and family back in America?

Adam: I’d like to invite them to Islam, the only religion acceptable to God, and the only way to salvation in the hereafter.

﴿فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ﴾

“Whoso is distanced from the Fire and is made to enter Paradise, he indeed is the winner.” (Aal ‘Imraan, Ayat 185)

I’d also like to let them know that I haven’t made any attempt to contact them over the past 12 years not because I have forgotten about them, but because of my security situation which makes it difficult to use phones and similar means of communication. That, and the fact that I figured that they would prefer not to be contacted directly by me, in order to avoid any more unwanted attention or further visits or hassle from the feds.

Resurgence: When you embraced Islam, how were you received by the local Muslim community?

Adam: With open arms, as well as a hailstorm of often contradictory advice and ideas, because in contrast to some *masjids* in America (particularly some of the smaller ones) which are dominated by a single *madhhab* (juristic school) or movement or ethnic group, this particular Islamic center (being the largest in the county and one of the largest in the state) was more cosmopolitan and was attended by Muslims from various and diverse backgrounds and schools of thought, to the extent that there were even a few Shi’a among them (or those married to Shi’a, like the chairman of the Islamic Society’s

board of directors). And I think many of these groups, movements and ideologies were jostling to get my attention and convince me of the superiority of their respective points of view. I guess this is not a bad experience to have if one wants to prepare oneself for the arenas of Jihad, where perfect and complete unity is not always to be found, and thus one may find himself in dialogue and debate with a number of different and competing ideas and perspectives, not to mention the barrage of criticism and opposition the Mujahid may receive from elements in his country of origin or elsewhere who are opposed to the very concept of waging Jihad today.

Resurgence: Other than the Shi'a, what were the main groups active in the *masjid*?

Adam: Well, let's see…there were the modernists, rationalists and "scholars of the Marines" who seemed to dominate the *masjid's* administration and leadership. There were the Tableeghis, of course, who I spent some time with both at this *masjid* as well as other *masjids* in the vicinity, including their main one in a suburb of Los Angeles where I would sometimes go for the weekly *'ijtimaa*; I once even traveled to a neighboring state to attend the annual regional *ijtimaa'*. There were the Ikhwaan (Muslim Brotherhood), who also had their own *masjid* a half-hour's drive away called Masjid al-Ansaar; I would sometimes go there too. There was Hizb al-Tahreer, whose local chapter called itself "Khalifornia" (i.e. *khaleefah* [caliph] + California = Khalifornia) and which seemed to me to consist of a single person, a Palestinian brother called Iyad (who, contrary to rumors, had absolutely nothing to do with my joining the Mujahideen; in fact, he never even tried to recruit me for his own group, much less recruit me for Jihad!). There were the Jama'at-i-Islami-type brothers who were affiliated with a nationwide organization called ICNA (Islamic Circle of North America); I used to attend the weekly gatherings of the small local chapter in some of the brothers' houses. There was a limited presence of those who would describe themselves as Salafis, whether they be the followers of the methodology of Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him), the followers of the Saudi religious establishment, or the blind followers of Rabi' al-Madkhali, 'Ali al-Halabi and their ilk; while they were limited in number in Orange County, they did have several *masjids* and congregations of their own up in the Los Angeles area, and I would occasionally visit some of these *masjids*, particularly a small one called Masjid al-Mo'min which was dominated by black and Latino Muslims and was headed by a Shaykh by the name of Fareed who I think was originally from some Caribbean country. There were the Muslims with no ties to any particular movement who would gravitate to each other according to ethnic or national origins, such as the Afghans and Somalis. And then there were a few individuals with what one might call "Jihadi" leanings, but the fact is, one really can't describe them as being a single group because of the absence of organizational links and the different, varying and occasionally contradictory outlooks they had. The only thing they shared was an affinity for Jihad—whether or not they actually took part in it—and support for the Mujahideen wherever they might be.

Resurgence: When and how did you first develop an interest in Jihad?

Adam: As I said, there were a handful of individuals in the area who were inclined to Jihad and supportive of the Mujahideen. It was through these brothers—some of whom had actually been to places like Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya—that I was eventually directed towards Jihad. This turning to Jihad happened over a period of months starting in 1996, and I can identify a couple of milestones for me on this journey:

First, there was a dear brother—whose name I would like to mention but won't—who said something to me which really stuck in my head and had a major effect on me. This brother was actually in a position of authority over me in a job I had, and when one day I made a mistake for which he should have reprimanded me—and for which I was actually being harshly reprimanded by someone else higher up the command chain—he instead smiled, put his hand on my shoulder and told me, "Don't worry; this problem will soon be behind you, and you







I was motivated by two things in particular:

1 the urge to help and defend persecuted and oppressed Muslims wherever they might be, and

2 the urge to help in the establishment of the Islamic state







will—in shaa Allah—go for Jihad in the Path of Allah." I don't know if the brother meant what he said or if it was just an off-the-cuff comment; but whatever it was, his suggestion continued to swirl around in my head for months, and made me think seriously about the matter. He may not even remember what he said, but I certainly do, and if this brother is reading this, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to him, and also thank him for the proposal he made which I was unable to take him up on due to my return to Afghanistan. May Allah place those words and that offer among his *hasanaat* (good deeds) on the Day of Judgement.

The other major milestone on my path to Jihad was the arrival in mid-to-late 1996 of an older brother called Abu 'Aa'id al-Filisteeni (real name Khalil Said al-Deek aka "Joseph Adams"—may Allah have mercy on him) who was a veteran of the Afghan and Bosnian Jihads, a computer engineer and a person active in the field of Jihadi media, particularly the audio and video recordings of the reviver of Jihad Shaykh Abdullah Azzam—may Allah have mercy on him—which he painstakingly collected and converted to digital formats. When he came to America for the last time—he was an American citizen—he brought with him copies of some videos which featured scenes from various arenas of Jihad around the world. He also brought with him stories of the training camps and of the Taliban movement which had recently come to power in most of Afghanistan and was implementing Shari'ah in a way never before seen in recent decades; and it was through him that I eventually travelled to the Pak-Afghan region and joined the caravan of Jihad.

Resurgence: Ultimately, what motivated you to join the Mujahideen?

Adam: Besides the desire to discharge the individual obligation of Jihad, I think I was motivated by two things in particular which are common to almost all those who mobilize: the urge to help and defend persecuted and oppressed Muslims wherever they might be, and the urge to help in the establishment of the Islamic state. And in my case, there was also an urge to see an Islamic government—the Taliban—at work. Not to mention a burning curiosity about the training camps, the nature of which Abu 'Aa'id was rather tightlipped about despite repeated questioning.

Resurgence: When did the thought of migrating to a Muslim country first cross your mind and what was the reason? Why did you choose to make *hijrah* to Afghanistan?

Adam: The thought must have first crossed my mind little more than a year after becoming Muslim. As for the reason, it was first and foremost the aforementioned difficulties and pressures any practicing Muslim faces in America; and frankly, I was afraid that if I remained in America I would sooner or later leave my religion, and as you know, when one has such a fear then emigration becomes obligatory by consensus of the *'Ulama* (scholars).

As for why I chose to migrate to Afghanistan, I think I already answered the question: it was the rise of the Taliban movement and their establishment of an Islamic system there.



Shaykh Osama bin Laden arriving at a Training Camp in Khost with Shaykh Abu Hafs al Misri (right)

However, I would like to point out that the first time I went to Afghanistan, it was more of a visit or a scouting trip than an actual emigration. It was only when I went the second time that I went with a definite intention to leave America once and for all.

Resurgence: How would you contrast your experience of being brought up in the West with spending the later years of your life in the Muslim world?

Adam: That's a difficult question for me to answer. But since you have resisted my attempts to sidestep it and insisted that I answer it, I guess I have no choice but to give it a shot!

I guess that when I was growing up in America, I was living in a stable and independent country which dominates other and is dominated by no one. But today, I live in a part of the world rocked by instability and social upheaval due to the dominance and interference of the country I used to call home and the parties allied with it. In America, a society which had already reached its zenith, there was nowhere to go but down. But when it comes to the Muslim world, things can get either better or worse. And we're doing our best to make it better.

Resurgence: What is your advice for the thousands of Muslim youth who yearn to migrate to Europe or America for "a better life"?

Adam: Isn't that sort of a selfish position to take? Why must some of us always think only of ourselves? Why not rely on Allah, stay here and try to make life here better both for ourselves as well as our fellow Muslims? My advice to these youth is to think again, get their priorities straight, and realize that hundreds of thousands like them made the "journey of a lifetime", but ultimately regretted it when they came face to face with the reality of the evils of Western culture, the truth about life for Muslims in the West, and the countless problems and challenges they face there which they didn't have to face at home.

Resurgence: When exactly did you first visit Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Adam: In July of 1997, for a visit which lasted about four and a half months, split about evenly between Afghanistan and the city of Peshawar, which at the time was still one of the main transit points to and from Afghanistan for emigrant Mujahideen and was heavily used by them for R&R, medical treatment and other logistical services and support.

Resurgence: Did you face any difficulties in traveling, whether logistically or in terms of security?

Adam: No, thanks to Allah. I easily got a tourist visa for Pakistan. My grandfather loaned me the money for the plane ticket. On the advice of Abu 'Aa'id and other brothers, I shaved my beard for the first time in my life and wore a jacket and necktie (also for the first—and thankfully only—time in my life),

My advice to Muslim youth who yearn to migrate to Europe or America is to think again, get their priorities straight, and realize that hundreds of thousands like them made the "journey of a lifetime", but ultimately regretted it when they came face to face with the reality of the evils of Western culture.



Shaykh Fahd Msalem (right) with another brother moments before his martyrdom

Shaykh Fahd Msalem (Azmarai) was the coordinator of the 1998 Embassy Bombings in Dar es Salam and Nairobi. He later became Al Qa'eda's Head of Military Operations for Pakistan. He can be seen here testing a remotely controlled machine gun and a locally manufactured short range missile at a location near Wana (Jan 1, 2009), just moments before he was targeted by a drone. Among those martyred with him included Shaykh Ahmad Salim Swedan. We ask Allah to grant them the highest stations in Paradise.

but I later realized all this altering of appearance hadn't really been necessary for someone like me with an American passport. The only real difficulty was the long journey from America which lasted about 36 hours with numerous transit stops and plane changes. I didn't sleep the entire length of the journey, which meant I was totally exhausted by the time the plane touched down in Peshawar.

Resurgence: After arrival in Peshawar, how did things go for you?

Adam: Not very well, I'm sorry to report. I almost immediately—while still in Peshawar—came down with a debilitating intestinal infection (giardiasis, to be precise) which meant that I spent more than three quarters of the trip's duration flat on my back in various guesthouses and infirmaries. I also very quickly developed a sort of homesickness which persisted for the entire trip and made me desperate to go back to America as soon as possible, until, that is, the moment I boarded the plane at Peshawar airport, at which point I regretted my decision immensely and resolved then and there to come back here as soon as possible, this time for good.

Resurgence: Where did you first receive military training? Most Mujahideen describe the early days of training as being tough for them? How was it for you?

Adam: It was indeed tough. In fact, I really didn't get any training worth mentioning on my first trip, mainly due to the illness but also because I was totally out of shape (when I arrived I weighed about 220 pounds/100 kg, although I would over the course of the trip shed about 27 kilos due to fluid loss and lack of appetite brought on by nausea). So all that I saw of the training camps on my first trip was about a week in Khalden camp in Khost Province and about 10 days in the Jihadwal/Farooq camp in Zhawar Kili (also in Khost), which would be bombed by the Americans about a year later, ostensibly in retaliation for the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. So I really was trained in no more than a couple of weapons, without actually getting to fire any of them.

Resurgence: How exactly were you able to enter and exit these camps so easily? Might not people be suspicious of an American showing up for Jihadi training and be hesitant to allow him into such sensitive installations?

Adam: Almost everyone who would come to Afghanistan for training—Americans or otherwise—would have what was called *tazkiyah* (literally "exoneration"): in other words, someone known to those in charge of the camps would have recommended him and vouched for his character and background. This was the equivalent of a security clearance. So in my case, the person who vouched for me was Abu 'Aa'id (may Allah have mercy on him), who was close to Brother Abu Zubaidah (may Allah deliver him), one of those responsible for running the Khalden camp along with the martyr (as we reckon him to be) Shaykh Ibn al-Shaykh al-Leebi (may Allah have mercy on him). So that's how I was sent to Khalden.

While I was at Khalden—which at the time was suffering from a lack of funding which made things a bit tough for the trainees—I heard some of the brothers talking longingly about "the Shaykh's camps", which they said were better equipped with better food (perhaps I should mention that eating the bread we were given in Khalden was about the closest one could get to eating wood without actually eating it). I asked them who this "Shaykh" was, and they replied "Shaykh Usama bin Ladin," which really didn't ring a bell for me. It may seem hard to believe



My reply was, "Who is Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri?" (my standard reply, it seems) which was met with astonished looks and cries of "You don't know Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of the Egyptian Jihad Group?" So that was how I first heard about Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri (may Allah preserve him)!

now, but at the time Shaykh Usama was not widely known in America and the West; he only became famous after Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. So I asked them about Shaykh Usama and who exactly he was and was told that he was a wealthy man from the Country of the Two Sanctuaries who had devoted his life and wealth to Jihad.

In any case, I didn't really have any urge to attend any other camp, even if it be better equipped with better food. I was more interested in getting back to America and putting the whole adventure behind me, due to the homesickness I mentioned earlier as well as the physical sickness. But what ended up happening is that when I returned to Peshawar, I met Brother Fahd Msalam (Azmarai/Usama al-Keeni—may Allah have mercy on him), who was about to travel abroad to (as would later become clear) help coordinate the embassy bombings. When I expressed to Brother Fahd my feeling that I was not cut out for training camps, he suggested that I go to the (generally stable) frontline north of Kabul and get my training there, as it might be less demanding than the camps.

So I took him up on his suggestion and went to the frontline, which at the time was just before Bagram, and there I met with Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi (may Allah deliver him) and Shaykh Abu Turab al-Urduni (may Allah have mercy on him). But when Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi learned I hadn't had any training worth mentioning, he told me I had no business being in the frontline until I had been to a camp and received some training!

So that's how I was sent back to Khost, this time destined for Zhawar, where there were three al-Qa'eda-run camps: Jihadwal (the main/central camp), al-Farooq (a camp for basic training) and al-Siddeeq (an auxiliary camp which I didn't visit and really don't know what it was used for; perhaps for special courses). I was sent to al-Farooq camp, where the ameer was Abd al-Fattah al-Leebi and his assistant was Abu Sulayman al-Jazaairi (may Allah have mercy on him) who should not be confused with Abu Sulayman al-Jazaairi aka Asadullah (may Allah have mercy on him), the explosives expert who ran a Khalden annex at Durunta near Jalalabad and was martyred by an American drone strike in the Bajaur tribal agency.

In any case, despite the facilities indeed being considerably better than in Khalden, I nonetheless experienced many of the same mental and physical challenges I had been experiencing since my arrival in the region, and I ended up asking to leave the camp after about 10 days to two weeks.

Resurgence: Was there anything that stands out from your time in al-Farooq?

Adam: There are a few things worth mentioning. I remember one day I was introduced by one of the brothers who spoke English to a brother whose leg had been relatively recently been amputated above the knee and was walking on crutches, and I was told that this was Brother Abu Dujaana al-Pasha, the son-in-law of Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri (may Allah preserve him), to which my reply was, "Who is Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri?" (my standard reply, it seems) which was met with astonished looks and cries of "You don't know Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of the Egyptian Jihad Group?" So that was how I first heard about Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri (may Allah preserve him)!

A few days later I was introduced by Shaykh Abu Dujaana al-Pasha himself to a conspicuously blond-haired, light-skinned Arab brother, whom, I was told, wanted to learn English, or improve on the English he already knew, and hoped that I could help teach him. I told him that I wasn't really the best of teachers and probably couldn't help him, especially since my grasp of Arabic was very weak at the time. Actually, "very weak" isn't the right word: zero or non-existent is more like it. So he walked away disappointed. To tell you the truth, there was also this fear in the back of my mind that he might use his knowledge of English to emigrate to the West "for a better life" and I didn't want to be a party to that. But to my surprise, I would later discover—after my return to Afghanistan in late 1998—that the blond-haired brother was "Ahmed the German" (nicknamed "the German" because of his appearance, but in reality an Egyptian), the individual who carried out the martyrdom operation at the American embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. May Allah accept him.

Another thing I remember is something that happened on a *Jumu'ah* day, which of course was usually a day off with no training and minimal protocol. I remember that I went down to the creek which ran through the camp to wash my clothes, and there was almost no one else around other than a few brothers doing what I was doing or just relaxing and splashing around in the water, and there was a Jihad *nasheed* (acapella song) playing over the camp loudspeaker, and I surveyed my surroundings, and for perhaps the first and only time since coming to the region, I felt a sense of belonging. This memory stayed with me and was one of the things which convinced me to eventually come back.

Resurgence: You eventually returned to America. How did that turn out, and how long did you stay there before coming back here?

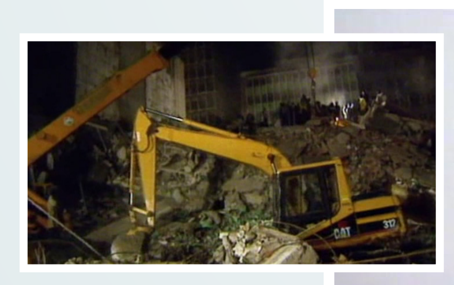
Adam: I ended up remaining in America for about a year, most of it spent preparing for the return trip to Afghanistan.

Resurgence: Did people ask you any questions about where you had been and what you had been doing?

Adam: Yes. I remember that my family asked some questions about that which I usually sidestepped by saying I had been to Pakistan, had become ill and as a result I had been laid up in bed for most of the trip, which wasn't far from the truth. Sometimes though, I had difficulty keeping my composure, like when my father asked me in a off-the-cuff manner if I had been to Afghanistan! Although his question was obviously born out of curiosity rather than suspicion, it nevertheless caught me off guard.

As for some of the brothers I knew at the *masjid*, I explained my absence by giving them a story about staying with relatives in Boston or something, which in hindsight, wasn't the smartest thing to do, since any hypothetical spy or detective following me would eventually discover the discrepancy between the tickets I bought to Pakistan and the story I told my family on one hand and the story I told these brothers on the other, which would definitely raise suspicions.

Another subject of inquiry and discussion was the cause of my dramatic weight loss and resulting pallor and weakness. My grandfather, who was a medical doctor, even offered a highly speculative—and highly unwelcome—"diagnosis" by wondering aloud if I could have contracted HIV/AIDS during my stay in Pakistan and asking if I had used any unsterilized needles or been given any injections by doctors using unsterilized syringes! But eventually, after being taken by my grandfather to







The attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam



> **When I heard Clinton announce that American forces had carried out missile strikes against camps run by Shaykh Usama I actually considered taking my grandfather's gun and opening fire at some of the local government buildings.**

see a physician friend of his at a local hospital—and after running up a disproportionately large medical bill (over $1500 for the doctor's fees, tests, diagnosis and treatment)—it became clear that I was suffering from giardiasis, anemia and an enlarged spleen, all of which was successfully treated—by the Grace of Allah—with a 5 or 6-day course of metronidazole and a couple of months of iron, folic acid and other vitamins and minerals.

Resurgence: Tell us something interesting from the year you spent in America.

Adam: One of the things that sticks in my mind is seeing reports in various media about Shaykh Usama (may Allah accept him) and his declaration of war against America, such as an article in an early 1998 issue of Reader's Digest which began with a picture of the Shaykh (altered to make him look sinister or "scary") over the headline "This Man Wants to Kill You" or some similarly sensationalistic title.

One of the major events of the war against America happened while I was in America itself: the attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which of course received major coverage in the media and were followed closely by the American cruise missile strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan. One of the challenges for me was trying to demonstrate no more than a moderate interest in the events in front of my family even as I waited breathlessly for the latest bit of information on first the bombings and then the missile strikes. I remember one of the "Jihadi" brothers came over and we sat together in his car and pored over the maps and satellite images of the Zhawar camps which one of the local newspapers had published after the strikes against them. Of course I recognized many of the buildings and landmarks in the pictures, which really brought it home to me. I think this was the first time I really felt that I was part of the war between Islam and *Kufr*. In fact, when I heard Clinton—the American president—announce that American forces had carried out missile strikes against camps run by Shaykh Usama (pronounced "*Yu*-sama" by the hillbilly in the White House), I was overcome by rage and actually considered taking my grandfather's gun and opening fire at some of the local government buildings (the Santa Ana, California federal building and courthouse, in particular), but since the gun in question was nothing more than a .22 caliber revolver, I quickly decided against it, which was probably for the better, because if I had gone ahead with the idea, it would have been a low-casualty, low-impact operation (to say the least).

Resurgence: Eventually you saved up the money for the return trip to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. What can you tell us about the trip?

Adam: In light of the changed security situation following the embassy bombings, I decided that I would travel to Pakistan just before the annual Tableeghi Jama'at *ijtimaa'* at Raiwind, when I knew there would be a lot of people arriving from around the world and my arrival shouldn't raise any suspicions. The problem was, I didn't have any way to contact Abu 'Aa'id in Peshawar, as he had moved and changed his phone number, and efforts to procure the new number were moving at what seemed to me like a snail's pace. So I probably should have waited until I had the number; but since I was impatient and had already made up my mind to go before the *ijtimaa'*, I bought a one-way ticket to Lahore with a departure date in the first week of November. So that's how I ended up going to Pakistan without any contacts or place to stay.

Resurgence: So you reached Lahore. What happened next?

Adam: Although I arrived in Lahore just before the Tableeghi *ijtimaa'* was to commence—perhaps two

or three days before, to be precise –I didn't have any plans to actually attend the gathering. Rather, I had decided I would go immediately to Islamabad, and then perhaps move on from there to Peshawar, in the hope that I might come across someone I knew. So I rented a taxi cab to Islamabad from the airport in Lahore. When I reached Islamabad, I was exhausted. The cab driver dropped me off at a *madrasah* (Islamic school), where I was able to rest a little and refresh myself. The next day, the people at this *madrasah* sent me to the Tableeghi *markaz* in Rawalpindi, where everyone was preparing to go to Raiwind. So of course, I had no option but to go with them. And so this is how I ended up going back to Lahore just two days after leaving it! After leaving my luggage in the care of the Tableeghi brothers in Rawalpindi, I boarded one of the buses the Tableeghi *markaz* had rented for the occasion, and we arrived in Raiwind a few hours later. I handed in my passport to those in charge of the *ijtimaa'*, and then I was taken to a section of the Raiwind *markaz* reserved for non-Pakistani citizens, and that's where I would stay until the end of the *ijtimaa'*.

Resurgence: How did the *Ijtimaa'* go?

Adam: It passed off fairly uneventfully, the monotony broken only by *Salaat* (prayers), meals—provided free of charge to the non-Pakistani citizens—a visit by the Pakistani president (Rafiq Tarar) and the arguments I had with some of the brothers (particularly the American ones) over certain Tableeghi practices and interpretations of some *Ayaat* (Quranic verses) and *Ahaadeeth* (sayings of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), particularly those concerning Jihad. It seems that repeated complaints about me were made to those in charge of the *ijtimaa'*, which eventually caused them to send a representative—a Kuwaiti brother—to "have a word" with me; I don't remember much about the conversation we had, but whatever I told him seemed to satisfy him, because (unlike some other brothers I met later in Afghanistan) I wasn't thrown out of the venue! I think the people who had complained to the administration had exaggerated a bit, because the Kuwaiti brother said to me that he had come expecting to find a totally unreasonable and irrational person—or a "big enemy" or something to that effect—but was happy to have found the opposite of what he had expected. So I was able to stay on until the very end.

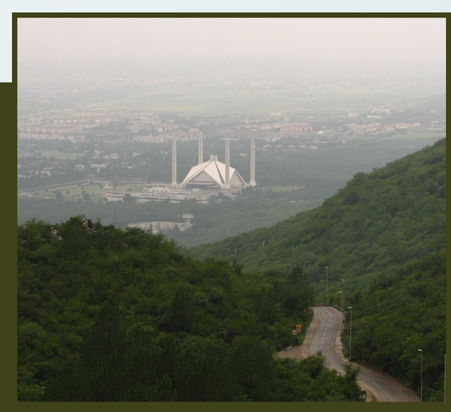
Resurgence: Then you went back to Islamabad?

Adam: Yes, and actually there's an interesting story surrounding that. On the final day of the *ijtimaa'*, as everyone was packing up and getting ready to leave, I met a couple of Somalis who were students at the International Islamic University in Islamabad (IIUI), and who, along with two busloads of IIUI students, had come to attend the *ijtimaa'*. When these Somali brothers learned that I didn't have a place to stay, they invited me to come stay with them at their hostel. I gratefully accepted the offer, and returned with them on one of the IIUI buses. The hostel was called Kuwait Hostel, and was located—like the main campus of the university—at the foot of the Margalla Hills near Faisal Masjid. Now, strictly speaking, residents of the hostel were not allowed to have guests, but the Somali brothers (may Allah reward them) happily flouted this rule for my sake. I think I stayed with them for about 10 days to two weeks. During my stay they introduced me to some of their friends from the Somali refugee community in Islamabad and I remember we were invited to some of their homes for meals, where I was introduced to Somali favorites like rice with bananas (or bananas with rice, as the case may be).

Resurgence: During your stay in the hostel, did anyone become suspicious of you or ask you any uncomfortable questions?

Adam: No, at least not at first. I think the hostel was full of so many different people from so many different countries that I didn't attract much attention, at least for the first few days. In fact, among those staying in the hostel, I recognized at least one person whom I had seen at Farooq or Jehadwal camps when I visited them the previous year. I didn't talk to him or tell anyone else what I was doing

I met a couple of Somalis who were students at the International Islamic University (IIU) in Islamabad. They invited me to come stay with them at their hostel.



Back view of Kuwait Hostel and Faisal Masjid

I spent about two and a half to three months training with Ustadh Abu Khabbab al-Misri (may Allah have mercy on him) and Commander Abu Mihjan al-Jazaairi and three to four months enrolled in Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir al-Misri's Shari'ah Institute.

or where I was going, but eventually my hosts informed me that the word around town was that I was probably one of the "Afghan Arabs" or something like that. I think that was a few days before I left.

Resurgence: And how did you leave?

Adam: Ever since coming back to Islamabad, I had been calling one of the brothers in America almost every day to ask him if he had gotten Abu 'Aa'id's number. Eventually, contact was made with Abu 'Aa'id—may Allah have mercy on him—and he dispatched two Pakistani brothers to pick me up from the hostel. They told me they were from the group headed by Maulana Masood Azhar, who was still in an Indian prison at the time, and I found out later that one of them had personally trained Brother Fahd Msalam (Usama al-Keeni—may Allah have mercy on him). But when they came to pick me up at the hostel, the first thing they said was "Are you out of your mind?! What are you doing here?! This is the area from which Ramzi Yousef was picked up, and it's known to be under constant surveillance by the intelligence agencies!" As the saying goes, what you don't know can't hurt you.

Anyway, after picking me up, these brothers got me safely to Peshawar and Abu 'Aa'id, and from there it was on to Afghanistan by way of the Torkham border crossing.

Resurgence: You've made it clear that on your initial visit to Afghanistan you didn't get much in the way of training. What about the second time you came?

Adam: When I returned the next time, my condition had improved, both physically and psychologically, and I was fortunate to be able to receive training at a number of different camps, including two camps at Durunta (near Jalalabad), where I spent about two and a half to three months training with Ustadh Abu Khabbab al-Misri (may Allah have mercy on him) and Commander Abu Mihjan al-Jazaairi from the Hizb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, as well as the Khalden camp in Khost, which was now better off financially and where I spent about three to four months enrolled in Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir al-Misri's Shari'ah Institute, which, like the main camp, combined Islamic education with military training and physical education, the difference being that here, the emphasis was on the religious education and not the other way around. We were given courses in mortars and pistols, among other things. We also had a Tunisian trainer named Musa who would take us out for morning runs and was very patient with those of us less physically fit, placing us at the front of the pack so that we could set the pace and teaching us how to run on our toes, inhale through our noses and exhale through our mouths; and he was so successful in getting us into shape that when our morning running and exercise regime was eventually merged with the main camp's, we were at the front of the pack by the grace of Allah, keeping in mind that the physical trainer in the main camp was a Tajik brother who could walk so fast you had to jog just to keep up with him!

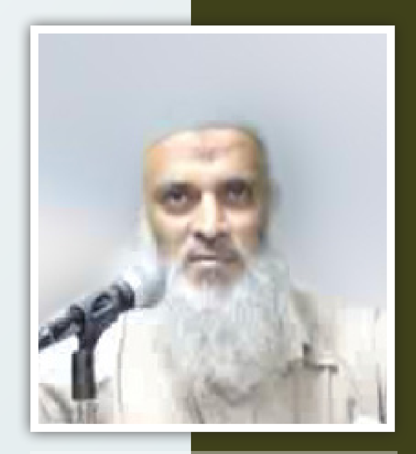
I think all Mujahideen training camps should have a separate physical education program specially designed to those who aren't in the best shape, instead of lumping couch



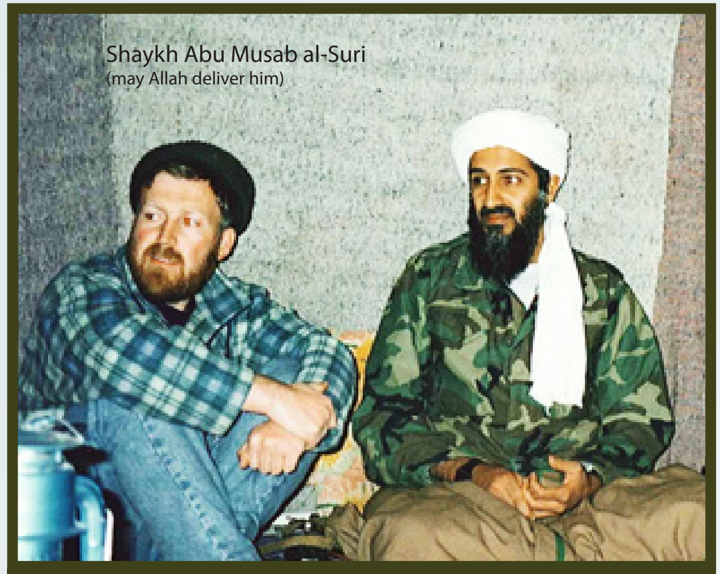
Shaykh Abu Khalid al Suri
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Ustadh Abu Khabbab al-Misri
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Shaykh Eesa (Marjan Saalim aka Abdul Hakeem Hassaan)
(may Allah protect him)



He had plans to turn the Qargha camp into what he called a "military academy"

potatoes together with iron men during the exercise period. This is like throwing someone who doesn't know how to swim into a raging river. Nine times out of ten, he's going to drown. Similarly, a brother who was not previously an athlete is most likely going to be overcome and discouraged by the exercise regimen. His inability to keep up with the rest of the pack may make him think that he wasn't cut out to be a Mujahid and lead him to return to his home country or wherever he came from to lead a life of surrender, submission and humiliation.

I also think that exercise regimens in general should be drawn up in consultation with qualified physical trainers, in order to avoid unnecessary damage and injuries to trainees' muscles, nerves and joints. And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: Where did you go after Khalden?

Adam: Shortly after leaving Khalden (due to it being shut down), word came of a new Taliban offensive on the frontline north of Kabul, and so I along with some of the brothers from Khalden (including Mu'aadh, the older brother of Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti who was martyred with Shaykh Usama bin Ladin, may Allah have mercy on them all) joined the group of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri (may Allah deliver him). This group was affiliated with the Defense Ministry of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and was stationed on the frontline near Bagram when I joined it; and because Shaykh Abu Mus'ab took a pledge from each of us that we would not leave his group until we had completed a specified amount of time with him, I ended up spending about a month and a half with him in the summer of 1999, with the time divided between the battle zone and the Qargha military base where he had a training camp. And of course, because the time I spent with him and his deputy Shaykh Abu Khalid—may Allah have mercy on him—involved actual combat experience, it is etched in my memory.

Resurgence: What memories of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab and his group stick with you in particular?

Adam: I remember that the Shaykh was very ambitious and had a lot of big ideas. For example, he had plans to turn the Qargha camp into what he called a "military academy." Regrettably, however, a lack of resources and subsequent developments came between him and seeing the project to fruition.

Another thing I remember about him is his demanding that each member of the group pray at least two *rak'ahs* of *nafil* (optional) prayer at night (between *'Isha* and *Fajr*) while in the frontline, as a form of spiritual *tarbiyah* (training).

And there was also his great respect for the Hanafi *madhhab*, which he had studied for a number of years, to the extent that some people thought that he himself was a Hanafi, which was not in fact the case.

Also, it was while I was with Shaykh Abu Mus'ab that I first met Shaykh Esa (real name Marjan Saalim aka "Abdul Hakeem Hassaan"—may Allah deliver him), who was introduced to us by Shaykh Abu Mus'ab as the Mufti of the Egyptian Jihad Group. Shaykh Esa would go on to spend some time with our group, although Shaykh Abu Mus'ab made certain not to allow him to accompany us to potentially dangerous areas, out of concern for his safety.

There are many other details and stories I could relate, but frankly, to narrate them all would require an entire article, or maybe even a series of articles.

As for the makeup of his group, it was at first a mixture of Arabs from various countries and regions (Yemenis, Egyptians, Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, etc.), as well as some non-Arabs, mainly British-born Pakistanis, Bengalis and Jamaicans. Later on, however, after I had left his group and joined al-Qa'eda, I noticed during a visit to Qargha that his group—or those attending his classes and courses—now seemed to be made up mostly of Arabs from the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine).

Resurgence: This leads us to the question of why you left Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's group and when, how and why you joined al-Qa'eda, an organization at war with your country of origin?

> Allah has named us Muslims, yes, but merely carrying a passport issued by a government of kufr (unbelief) or riddah (apostasy) doesn't make you any less of a Muslim!

Adam: To make a long story short, after I had completed the time I had pledged to stay with Shaykh Abu Mus'ab—may Allah deliver him—I went back to Pakistan in late summer 1999 in order to renew my passport, which was about to expire, at the American embassy in Islamabad.

Resurgence: Excuse me for interrupting, but if you had already performed *hijrah* to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, then what further use did you have for your American passport?

Adam: I had performed *hijrah*, true, but that didn't necessarily mean that I might not need the passport in the future, not to return to *live* in America of course, but perhaps—for example—to travel there or to a third country for some Jihad-related work. And also, you never know what the future might hold; the Islamic state might suffer a setback—as it did in the case of Afghanistan—and you might be forced to look for a new place to emigrate to, and in that case, your original passport might come in very handy.

And may I add that what some brothers are doing today—in terms of destroying their passports as soon as they set foot in the land of Jihad in order to demonstrate their allegiance to Islam and Muslims and rejection of territorial nationalism and ties of citizenship—is a mistake born out of misguided zeal and optimism. You might be surprised to learn that there were some brothers who did the same thing during the first Afghan Jihad against the Russians for many of the same reasons, and when things didn't turn out the way they had expected, they later came to regret destroying their passports.

Resurgence: But—and please excuse me again—didn't you yourself tear up your passport on camera in your video of 2007 entitled, "An Invitation to Reflection and Repentance"?

Adam: Yes I did, and I'm proud of it and would happily do it again if given the chance! However, I would like to point out that I only tore up my passport after it had expired and after I had become an "international fugitive," which meant that my passport had become more or less a one-way ticket to prison. So destroying my passport was—as I stated at the time—no more than a symbolic gesture with no negative consequences on my ability to travel and engage in Jihad-related activities in other parts of the world. And there is a big difference between that and someone who is not—as far as we know—known to the enemies destroying his passport merely to demonstrate his loyalties and affirm his identity. Allah has named us Muslims, yes, but merely carrying a passport issued by a government of *kufr* (unbelief) or *riddah* (apostasy) doesn't make you any less of a Muslim!

Resurgence: Good point. But just for the record: was tearing up your passport on camera your idea, or were you asked to do it by someone else?

Adam: It was my idea. In fact, when I pitched the concept to the head of as-Sahab Foundation for Media Production, he seemed a bit hesitant at first, whether because he thought that such a move might be a little too drastic or because he thought that the passport might be of use to the brothers responsible for producing travel documents, but I was eventually able to convince him that my passport was now otherwise useless and destroying it on camera was the best way to dispose of it.

Resurgence: OK, so you went to Pakistan in 1999 to renew your passport. What happened then?

Adam: While I was in Peshawar waiting for my passport application to be processed, I stayed as usual with Abu 'Aa'id at his Hayatabad home. Abu 'Aa'id, who was rather upset with me having taken part in the summer offensive north of Kabul ("You could have been taken prisoner by Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces!" he said), advised me to join "the Shaykh's group"—as we knew al-Qa'eda then—rather than continue to float aimlessly between the various and sundry groups, camps and guesthouses which were scattered across the Afghan landscape. Despite the fact that Abu 'Aa'id himself was a loner with no affiliation to any particular group or organization, he felt that it would be best for me, as a young and inexperienced individual, to join a large and well-organized group like al-Qa'eda, which could not only properly channel my energies and utilize and exploit any talents or abilities I might have, but could also support me and help me out if I were to get

Al-Qa'eda from its inception has always been an "Islamic Internationale" and has never limited itself to a particular country or region

into a bind, like being captured or arrested for example.

There was also another brother who seconded Abu 'Aa'id's opinion about me joining al-Qa'eda, and it was this brother who would eventually accompany me to Kabul and introduce me to Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Misri—may Allah preserve him. Of course, I think the brothers in al-Qa'eda already knew a lot about me, due to my prior contacts with them, whether those I talked about earlier or other contacts I haven't mentioned; and that's in addition to the fact that Abu 'Aa'id and Abu Zubaidah—through whom I came to Afghanistan—were both well known to the brothers in al-Qa'eda and trusted by them. But all the same, I still was relatively new, and protocol dictates that you have someone introduce you to the leadership rather than just going up to them and saying, "Hi, I'm Abu Suhayb al-Amreeki (the *kunya* [nickname] by which I was known) and I'd like to join your organization".

Resurgence: You mentioned that al-Qa'eda was large and well-organized. Aside from the size and level of organization, was there anything else which distinguished al-Qa'eda from other groups at that time?

Adam: Yes, but I would first like to clarify that I meant that it was large and well-organized in comparison to the groups I had trained and fought with until then, such as Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's group and the Khalden brothers. But that doesn't mean that al-Qa'eda was necessarily the largest and best-organized group in town; there may have been others larger in size and with better organization, but they may not have been as suited for me due to their focus on specific regional issues, for example, or their having certain conditions for membership which I may not have met. So this is why al-Qa'eda was more or less the default choice as far as I was concerned.

Off the top of my head, I can think of several things that distinguished (and continue to distinguish) al-Qa'eda from many (but not all) other groups:

First, its global/international reach and membership, as opposed to some other groups which focused almost exclusively on particular countries or regions, and sometimes even seemed to limit the membership of their group to people from those countries or regions (and I should clarify at the outset that I'm not criticizing these groups for having such policies, which may well be justified; I'm just stating the facts). For example, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group was concerned primarily with fighting the *Taghoot* of Libya, al-Qaddhafi, and as far as I know its leadership and even its membership base was almost exclusively comprised of Libyans or Libyans-in-exile. The Egyptian groups were focused on fighting the Egyptian regime and were made up of Egyptians. Similarly, the Kashmiri groups or Pakistani groups fighting in Kashmir and Afghanistan were focused on Jihad in Kashmir and India and were made up mainly of Kashmiris or Pakistanis. The Kurdish group was preoccupied with Jihad in Kurdistan and led primarily by Kurds; the Turkistanis were preoccupied with East Turkistan; and so on. In contrast, al-Qa'eda from its inception has always been an "Islamic Internationale" and has never limited itself to a particular country or region. Rather, it has always had a global outlook and a presence in dozens of countries around the region, and has had in its senior leadership—not to mention its rank-and-file membership—people from many different countries and origins: Hijazis, Nejdis, Yemenis, Egyptians, Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, Libyans, Maghrebis, Tunisians, Europeans, Pakistanis, Indians, Bengalis, Balochis: you name it. I don't think there is any Muslim country or people which haven't been represented in one way or another in al-Qa'eda. And Allah knows best.

The second thing which distinguished al-Qa'eda—and still does—is **its focus on fighting America, the Crusader West and the Jews** (the far enemy/original unbelievers), as opposed to some other groups and movements which gave priority to fighting the local regimes (the near enemy/apostates). The martyr of Islam (as we reckon him to be) Shaykh Usama bin Ladin (may Allah accept him), in a letter to Shaykh Abu Baseer al-Wuhayshi (Ameer of Qa'eda al-Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula—may Allah preserve him) which was released in the Abbottabad documents as SOCOM-2012-0000016, clarifies the group's policy in this regard, saying:

"I would like to remind you of the general policy of al-Qaida in the military and media spheres.

Al-Qaida has been distinguished by its concentration on the larger external enemy before the internal enemy, because while the internal enemy is greater in terms of unbelief, the external enemy's unbelief is clearer, and is also more dangerous at the present time. [Today,] America is the head of unbelief. If Allah cuts it off, the wings will be weakened, as 'Umar, with whom Allah was pleased, said to al-Hurmuzan[5] when he asked for his advice, saying, 'Give me your advice, for you are the most knowledgeable among the people of Persia'. He replied, 'Yes, Persia today is made up of one head and two wings.' Umar asked him, 'Where is the head?' He replied, 'It is in Nahawand.' Then he mentioned the location of the two wings, and said, 'My opinion, O Commander of the Faithful is that if you cut the wings, the head will be weakened.' To which 'Umar replied, 'You lie, O enemy of Allah! Rather, I will go straight to the head and cut it off, because if Allah cuts off the head, the wings will come off by themselves.' […]

"I had earlier given an example meant to clarify al-Qaida's general policy of concentrating on America, which is that the enemies of the Ummah are like a malignant tree, and America is its trunk with a diameter of 50 cm, while its branches are numerous and of different sizes, and include the countries of NATO and many of the regimes in the [Islamic] region. We want to topple this tree by sawing it down, but our power and energy is limited. Therefore, the safest and most effective way to bring down the tree is for us to focus on sawing at the American base of the tree. […]

"You have a practical example of that, which is how the Mujahideen in Afghanistan were able to cut the root of the Russian tree, after which all its branches fell one after the other, from South Yemen to Eastern Europe, without us expending any effort on these branches at that time.

"Therefore, any arrow and landmine which can be used to target Americans while other enemies are present should be spent on the Americans instead of on other members of the NATO pact, to say nothing of lesser enemies.[…]

"The one who keeps abreast of events can see that it is our operations and messages which have really exhausted and strained the Americans, especially after September 11th. So we should increase pressure on them until a balance of terror is achieved and the cost of war, occupation, and domination of our countries becomes more than its benefits for them and they reach a state of exhaustion which will motivate them to submit, withdraw from our countries and stop supporting the Jews."

Regrettably, this strategic policy choice was—and still is—viewed by some other groups and movements as amounting to deviation from the path of Jihad and the "true methodology", and is used as a gateway for criticism and condemnation of al-Qa'eda, even though the issue is essentially one of strategy, tactics and priorities and not a dispute over the obligatory nature of fighting the apostate regimes. In this regard, Shaykh Usama says in the recently-released video entitled *Bushriyaat* (Glad Tidings), in reply to a question concerning the groups which prefer to focus on the near enemy:

"As I said, strike the head and the legs, arms and everything else will come down. It's an octopus, and its head is Crusader/Zionist America and Israel. Some people are of the opinion that it is beneficial to strike the tentacles of the octopus. Striking them is fine and beneficial, but we have a relatively limited number of bullets in comparison to the size of International Unbelief and the amount of weapons and ammunition it has. So as long as the number of [Mujahid] youth is few and our capabilities are limited, we should condense matters by striking the head. They [i.e. those who believe in striking the tentacles] deserve to be rewarded for their ijtihaad [discretionary judgement] and their deeds, but according to our fiqh, we believe that we should strike the more important part, the head. This is what we believe, and in any case,

[5] Al-Hurmuzan, or in some versions, Al-Hurmuzdan: According to the books of history, he was the ruler of Tustar (Shushtar) under the last king of the Sassanian Persian Empire, Yazdegerd III. He is said to have embraced Islam, some say after being captured by the Muslims. It is said that he later conspired with Jufainah (a Christian) and Abu Lu'Lu the Zoroastrian to assassinate 'Umar (with whom Allah was pleased) and that he is the one who supplied Abu Lu'lu the weapon which he used to stab 'Umar. It is said that Al-Hurmuzan was subsequently killed in revenge by one of the sons of 'Umar. And Allah knows best the accuracy of these narrations.

The safest and most effective way to bring down the tree is for us to focus on sawing at the American base of the tree

these are matters of ijtihaad (discretion): do you strike America first or Hosni Mubarak first, or second, or third? These are matters of discretion, and our ijtihaad has led us to take the position that we should first strike the head of Unbelief and the leaders of Unbelief, in accordance with the texts. And Allah knows best."

I should mention that when Shaykh Usama talks about this policy being in accordance with the texts, he is alluding to texts from the Sunnah like the aforementioned exchange between 'Umar (with whom Allah was pleased) and al-Hurmuzan, as well as the insistence of Abu Bakr (with whom Allah was pleased) on dispatching the force led by Usama bin Zaid (with whom Allah was pleased) to fight the Byzantines even as the Arabian Peninsula was in the throes of apostasy after the passing of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He is also talking about evidence from the Qur'an, like Allah's statement:

﴿فَقَاتِلُواْ أَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لاَ أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنتَهُونَ﴾

"Then fight the leaders of disbelief - for they have no binding oaths - in order that they may desist." (al-Tawbah 12)

The third thing which distinguished al-Qa'eda is **its lack of a written *'aqeedah* (doctrine/creed) or *manhaj* (methodology) which every prospective member has to agree to before joining**, in contrast to some groups which have strict conditions for membership which may lead to many people being excluded for not being up to the mark, as if Jihad is the exclusive domain of an elite few. Al-Qa'eda, on the other hand, tends to be much more open in accepting members even if they may not agree with all the positions of the leadership, so long as they are Muslims who have been vetted security-wise and are not known for major *bid'a* or outright criminality. I for one think this approach is the best suited for making use of the capabilities of the Ummah and rallying the Muslims to fight their enemies and restore the Islamic system. On the other hand, when you limit membership of your group to those who agree with you in every minutiae of *fiqh* and *'aqeedah*, I think you may be guilty of closing doors which Allah has left open and isolating yourself, the Jihad and the Mujahideen from the wider Ummah. Allah has not limited Jihad to people who follow a certain *fiqh* or *madhhab*; on the contrary, Allah has ordained Jihad for the entire Ummah, even sinful Muslims, so what about those who follow a different *madhhab* from yours or even the same *madhhab* except that they differ with you on a few minor points of *fiqh* or *'aqeedah*? How can you turn them away unless they change their views and positions on matters which are open to debate and discussion and—more often than not—have little or no bearing on day-to-day operations? As long as someone agrees with the practical

Several things distinguish al-Qa'eda:

1. its global/international reach and membership
2. its focus on fighting America, the Crusader West and the Jews
3. its lack of a written 'aqeedah (doctrine/creed) or manhaj (methodology) which every prospective member has to agree to before joining
4. its recognition of the importance of public relations for the Mujahideen and of winning and preserving popular support of the Muslim masses
5. its particularly close ties with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

> *Takfeerism* and *Kharijism* are deviant ideologies which we must never tire of warning against and combating, due to the danger they pose to Islam and Muslims in general and the Jihad and Mujahideen in particular.

approach and policies of your group and is prepared to listen to and obey the ameer except in disobedience to Allah, then why should they be prevented from joining you?

I would like to point out that I am not talking here in terms of permissibility or impermissibility, but rather in terms of appropriateness and what is in the best interest of the Ummah.

The fourth thing distinguishing al-Qa'eda is **its recognition of the importance of public relations for the Mujahideen and of winning and preserving popular support of the Muslim masses** (while always relying on Allah alone), as opposed to some groups which reject or belittle the concept of maintaining a popular support base and consider it to be a "sophism" or even an "idol" (we seek **refuge** in Allah).

The fifth thing which distinguished it is **its particularly close ties with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan,** as opposed to others—individuals for the most part rather than groups— which were ambiguous towards the Emirate if not outright hostile towards it, to the extent that there were elements which considered the Emirate to be outside the fold of Islam, whether due to those elements' partisanship and fanatical allegiance to a rival Afghan faction or due to their deviant understanding of Islam and extreme application of the principle of *Takfeer* (excommunication). The irony was that when these *Takfeeri* types came to Afghanistan for training—or were forced to come to Afghanistan after being chased out of their homes in Peshawar and Khyber Tribal Agency by the government of Nawaz Sharif—they were warmly welcomed by the Emirate and sometimes even provided with free accommodations and other facilities, most likely because the Emirate was not aware of their deviant views. But *alhamdullillah*, these extremists have always been relatively few in this region of the world and never very well organized; and all praise is due to Allah.

Resurgence: What exactly do you mean when you say "*Takfeeri*"?

Adam: A *Takfeeri* is someone who has gone beyond the limits of Shari'ah in terms of his application of the principle of *Takfeer* and has adopted this excessiveness and extremism as his methodology, thus making it his defining characteristic. In other words, we're not talking about someone who has made a few mistakes in this regard; we're talking about a person who lives and breaths unregulated *Takfeer*.

Resurgence: Is a *Takfeeri* the same as a *Khariji*?

Adam: Not necessarily. It appears that "*Takfeeri*" may be a broader term than "*Khariji*," which may refer to a specific type of *Takfeeri*. But whether or not they are one and the same is largely irrelevant; what is important for us to know that both *Takfeerism* and *Kharijism* are deviant ideologies which we must never tire of warning against and combating, due to the danger they pose to Islam and Muslims in general and the Jihad and Mujahideen in particular.

Resurgence: We'll delve into the topic of *Takfeerism* in more detail later (Allah willing), but right now, let's return to the moment you joined al-Qa'eda. What happened when you were introduced to Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Misri (may Allah preserve him)?

Adam: As I recall, he asked me a few questions. Then he handed me over to Brother Khallad (Waleed bin Attash) and Shaykh Abu al-Faraj al-Leebi (may Allah deliver them), who took me immediately to one of the main al-Qa'eda training camps at that time, which was located at the Mes Aynak copper mine in Logar province. There I was enrolled at once in an extremely difficult course which had already started some days or even weeks before. This course was taught by a tough drill sergeant known as Salahuddin the Iranian—who may have been a Baloch or a Kurd or a Persian convert from Shi'ism—assisted by a (not-so-tough) Tanzanian brother called Abu Qatada. The focus was on close-range fighting using martial arts techniques and light weapons like knives and pistols. From what I gathered from the other brothers enrolled in the course, it was meant to train new bodyguards for Shaykh Usama bin Ladin (may Allah have mercy on him). However, I later came to the conclusion—two years later, to be exact—that it was meant to train the "muscle men" for the September 11th operations! And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: So did you finish the course?

Adam: No, I was dismissed by the instructor two days later! And for

First moral of the story: Shaykh Usama was an excellent shot.

Second moral of the story: even if you're the best shot in the world, you won't hit the mark if you're using a defective weapon.



the record, I was by no means the only one to be expelled from the course or drop out of it, because as I said, it was extremely difficult. Moreover, no one actually "completed" the course, since it ended up being cut short due to the camp being closed down.

Resurgence: What happened after you left the course?

Adam: I met with Shaykh Abu Muhammad in the camp and he asked me if I wanted to enroll in another, less demanding course. I politely declined and asked to be sent back to Kabul. After a few days of recuperation in the Karte Parwan guesthouse, I went to the frontline north of Kabul, at Qarabagh, where I spent several weeks at the al-Qa'eda forward base there until the weather started to become colder. Then I returned to Kabul, and after winter set in and the snow began to fall, I asked to be sent to Qandahar, where I had heard the group had opened an institute for Arabic and Shari'ah studies which could be of benefit to me; and another thing which made me eager to go to Qandahar was to escape the biting cold in Kabul! So in early January 2000 I traveled to Qandahar, which would be my home for the next 22 months.

Resurgence: Did you enroll in the institute as planned?

Adam: Yes. I immediately began an Arabic course taught by Shaykh Abu Yusuf al-Mauritani (may Allah have mercy on him), while at the same time taking a number of basic Shari'ah courses taught by a number of Shaykhs, which the organization had set up primarily with new brothers in mind for them to take before starting training at the camp (although others could also take the courses and did). I think I really benefited a lot from these courses, despite their basic and introductory nature.

Resurgence: When in Qandahar, you must have met Shaykh Usama bin Ladin (may Allah have mercy on him). How did you find him as a person? Any special memories of the Imam that you would like to share with our readers?

Adam: I was fortunate to meet Shaykh Usama—may Allah have mercy on him—on a number of occasions, mainly fleeting encounters consisting of exchanges of salaams, handshakes and smiles, and occasionally a shared meal. There was also an occasion where I acted as translator between Shaykh Usama and a group of brothers who had come from Pakistan.

I also attended a number of gatherings and events at the Qandahar airport complex (aka Tarnak Farms), where Shaykh Usama lived. One of the memories I have of those gatherings is the day on which were taken those famous pictures of Shaykh Usama dressed in white and firing a Kalashnikov from a crouching position with his bodyguards and other brothers lined up behind him (I'm the one on the Shaykh's right who is wearing a white turban, long green shirt and black shoes and has his hands crossed behind his back). I remember that the Shaykh took a number of shots at the target—which was a considerable distance away—but failed to hit it even once, although the bullets were hitting in about the same place every time. This led the Shaykh to suspect that something was wrong with the gun and so he asked for another one. He took aim with the new gun and hit the bull's-eye dead on with the very first shot! First moral of the story: Shaykh Usama was an excellent shot. Second moral of the story: even if you're the best shot in the world, you won't hit the mark if you're using a defective weapon.

Another thing which stood out about Shaykh Usama was his care and concern for the safety and wellbeing of his men, in contrast to some self-centered leaders who don't care if their entire army

This was Ameer-ul-Momineen Mulla Muhammad Umar Mujahid, and I think that if I hadn't been told which one he was, I wouldn't have been able to identify him at that moment, because there was absolutely nothing to distinguish him from the men around him.

is wiped out in the process of pursuing their selfish and worldly objectives. I remember that when a brother called Shaddad—whom I knew personally and had trained in some of the camps—went missing after being separated from his team during a particularly difficult training exercise, the Shaykh himself took part in the search team (the brother's body was eventually found at the base of a cliff which he had apparently fallen from due to exhaustion or losing his way—may Allah accept him as a martyr).

The Shaykh would also regularly inquire about the conditions of the Mujahideen in the various regions, whether in terms of supplies, finances, their security situation or even their marital status and how often they were able to visit their families. He also gave great importance to healthcare, ordering that special allowances be made in the budget to cover medical treatment, children's vaccinations and the like.

So the Shaykh really cared for the wellbeing of his men and their families, and this is something that comes through clearly in the Abbottabad letters.

Resurgence: We have heard that you worked closely with the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. How did that come about, and how would you describe your experience with the Islamic Emirate?

Adam: A few months after arriving in Qandahar, I was approached by Shaykh Abu Hafs al-Mauritani (Dr. Mahfudh ould al-Waalid), Dean of the Shari'ah Institute and one of the top leaders of al-Qa'eda at the time, and told by him that some brothers were starting a magazine in English and needed someone with the appropriate language skills to work with them, and he asked me if I would be able to help. That's how he put it: "some brothers." He didn't tell me who exactly these brothers were or give me any other details. So when he introduced me to the brothers in question, I was surprised to discover that they were in fact from the office of Ameer-ul-Momineen himself, and that the magazine they were starting was going to be an official publication of the Emirate in Arabic and English called—appropriately enough—"The Islamic Emirate".

The English version of the magazine was originally supposed to be a translation of the Arabic version from start to finish, and my job was meant to be proofreading and correcting translations done by other people, but when I looked at the translations they provided me with, I told them I can do better than this, and so I ended up doing most of the translations myself with the help of an Arabic-English dictionary, an experience which really helped me to improve my Arabic language skills and broaden my vocabulary. Later on, I myself would write some articles to fill out some of the issues or replace articles from the Arabic edition which we were unable to translate in time, and I would also occasionally choose some material from other publications like the Kabul Times to add some variety to the mix. I would even end up doing some typesetting and design work. In the end, we were able—by the grace of Allah—to publish about 7 or 8 issues over a period of about 12 months.

Working on the magazine was a positive experience which, in addition to improving my language skills, opened up a number of doors for me and gave me an opportunity to see the Emirate from the inside, become acquainted with its official policies and the ins-and-outs of its media outreach, and get to know a number of its senior leaders and officials.

Resurgence: Did you ever get a chance to meet *Ameer-ul-Momineen* Mulla Muhammad Omar (may Allah protect him)? If so, what kind of an impression did this meeting leave on you?

Adam: I did get the opportunity to see Ameer-ul-Momineen in person on one occasion, although I didn't have any personal contact with him. It was a Jumu'ah and I was at the magazine office as usual when the editor-in-chief came and told me to come with him to the governor's guesthouse, which was a 3-minute walk from our office. This guesthouse used to be the residence of Ameer-ul-Momineen himself, until it was targeted by a huge truck bomb which led to the martyrdom of a number of members of his family and his

Leniency, clemency and mercy also have important roles to play in our decision-making and policies.

guard contingent. Some of the effects of the bomb were still visible at that time, like large pieces of shrapnel lodged in trees and other things. Anyway, the residence was now a guesthouse for then-governor of Qandahar Mulla Muhammad Hassan Rahmani (may Allah preserve him), and it also had a small *masjid*. When we reached the guesthouse, it was just about time for the Jumu'ah prayer, and there were a large number of people milling around as if expecting something or someone. And sure enough, after a few minutes, a caravan of seven identical black Toyota Land Cruisers came speeding up the gravel-covered driveway, each one following closely after the other, which made for a dramatic—and noisy—entrance. I didn't have be told whose motorcade this was, especially since I had seen one of these same vehicles some weeks before speeding down the main thoroughfare in Qandahar and was told that it was Ameer-ul-Momineen himself at the wheel hurrying to get to the *masjid* lest he miss the dusk prayers.

When the car doors opened and everyone got out, my editor—who was one of Ameer-ul-Momineen's senior aides—pointed out to me a tall, well-built man in a black turban, dark green suit and brown vest/waistcoat. This was Ameer-ul-Momineen Mulla Muhammad Umar Mujahid, and I think that if I hadn't been told which one he was, I wouldn't have been able to identify him at that moment, because there was absolutely nothing to distinguish him from the men around him, whether in terms of dress and demeanor or in terms of the way those around him treated him. He then proceeded to the *masjid*, where a large group of officials from various provinces were waiting to give him the *bay'ah* (pledge of allegiance). What followed was a very emotional scene, with people crying and kissing his outstretched hand.

So that's the day I saw Ameer-ul-Momineen. It left quite an impression on me, even though—as I say—I didn't actually meet him. However, I did meet one of his younger brothers, as well as his elderly uncle, Mawlawi Muhammad Anwar, who was a Shaykh-ul-Hadeeth, and who was distinguished by his white beard, white clothes and traditional embroidered silver shoes with the upturned, curly-tipped toes or *nokh*.

Resurgence: While in Qandahar, did you hear any stories or anecdotes about Ameer-ul-Momineen which might be of interest to our readers?

Adam: Yes. I mentioned that he was tall and well-built (like many Pushtuns, particularly those in southern Afghanistan). I was told by my editor that Ameer-ul-Momineen used to be in even better shape than when I saw him, but that the duties, burdens and worries of leadership had worn him down a little. I was also told that he was quite athletic and nimble and was even capable of reaching the top of a doorway with his kick.

One amusing story I heard while in Qandahar concerns the time when Francesc Vendrell, the United Nations special representative for Afghanistan, was granted an audience with Ameer-ul-Momineen. You have to keep in mind that he did not often meet with unbelievers, which meant that Vendrell was probably one of the few Westerners to meet him face-to-face. And the fact that Mulla Muhammad Umar—may Allah preserve him—didn't regularly appear in public, grant interviews with outsiders or allow himself to be photographed really piqued their curiosity and increased the mystery, intrigue and mystique for them. Those who were present in the meeting say that when Vendrell was ushered in, Ameer-ul-Momineen was using the wireless set, and instead of immediately rising to greet Vendrell as he would do with other guests, he kept him waiting for about 15 minutes before acknowledging his presence; and those in the room say Vendrell kept staring at him the whole time, as though he was afraid that if he took his eyes off him he would disappear, or as if he was trying to memorize every detail of his appearance! I think Ameer-ul-Momineen really confounded and bewildered the enemies. They truly saw him as someone from another time and place.

Another story concerns the time the military ruler of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, sent Ameer-ul-Momineen a gift of an armor-plated, bulletproof Mercedes-Benz sedan or limousine worth about one million dollars for Ameer-ul-Momineen's own personal use. Ameer-ul-Momineen not only didn't use the vehicle himself, he also prohibited it to be used by any other official in the Emirate, and told them, "A luxury vehicle like this isn't appropriate for us". And as you may or may not know, the Emirate has always had a strict policy against officials accepting gifts.

There's one other anecdote involving Ameer-ul-Momineen I'd like to share with the readers, and it's not something I was told about him, but rather, concerns a decision he made, some people's negative reaction to his decision, and the positive results his decision

Many of the allegations of misogyny and discrimination against women leveled at the Islamic Emirate have been deliberate exaggerations or are malicious fabrications

The Emirate's efforts to provide not just girls' education but even women's education were deliberately ignored

ultimately had. I'm talking about Ameer-ul-Momineen's decision to release the British journalist Yvonne Ridley, who had been arrested after entering Afghanistan without permission a few days after the beginning of the Crusader aggression in late 2001. This decision was met with disappointment and opposition from at least one brother I knew, who believed she should have been imprisoned as long as possible and only released in exchange for Muslim captives being held by the British government, and questioned the wisdom of releasing her just as an aggression in which Britain was an active partner was getting under way. Obviously, I don't disagree with the principle of exchanging enemy prisoners for our captives nor do I deny the importance of having such a policy, but every rule has its exceptions, and Ameer-ul-Momineen, with his wisdom, saw that this was one of them. And I think most of us know the rest of the story: Yvonne went on to embrace Islam and become an (unofficial) ambassador for the Islamic world—including the Emirate—and a dispeller of myths about it, as well as an outspoken advocate for the rights of Muslim captives languishing in the dank dungeons and human zoos of the West.

I think two important lessons can be taken from this: first, that Allah places *barakah* (blessings) in the *ijtihaad*—discretionary judgement—of the ameer as long as it is made in accordance with the principles of Shari'ah, even if some do not agree with his decision. And the second lesson is that the strictest or most severe option is not always the best option; leniency, clemency and mercy also have important roles to play in our decision-making and policies.

Resurgence: But an accusation often leveled at the Taliban is that they have been too strict and severe—misogynistic even—in their treatment of women and girls, and have deprived them of their most basic Islamic and human rights. From your perspective, is this accusation justified?

Adam: I think this is one of the myths which Yvonne has tried to dispel in her articles and lectures. There may have been some mistakes made, such as excessive harshness on the part of some of those engaged in *al-hisbah* (enjoining of good and forbidding of evil), but I think that this accusation stems for the most part from bias and enmity, and that many of the allegations of misogyny and discrimination against women leveled at the Islamic Emirate have been deliberate exaggerations or are malicious fabrications stemming from the animosity of the Crusader West and those who revolve around it towards Islam and Muslims in general and Islamic tenets like Hijab, separation of the sexes and prohibition of adultery and fornication in particular.

There is no doubt that there has been a deliberate cover-up of the Taliban's position on women's rights. Take the topic of education for example: it is true the Islamic Emirate closed girl's schools, but this was due mainly to logistical reasons such as a lack of resources amid the ongoing war in the country. Not only was this excuse not accepted by the mainstream media, but the Emirate's efforts to provide—despite the challenges—not just girls' education but even *women's* education were deliberately ignored, and even worse, sometimes even misrepresented for anti-Emirate propaganda. For example, during the reign of the Emirate there was a nursing college for women at the Mirwais medical complex in Qandahar, and journalists and cameramen were taken to visit this college, but did they tell their readers and viewers about it? No! On the contrary, an Arab magazine called *al-Majallah* which is notorious for its animosity to all things Islamic and Muslim (not surprising, since it is published by the Saudi ruling family) printed a picture of the students of this college—in full Hijab, of course—taken as they were being taught a class by their teacher (a man whom I happened to know personally), above a caption in which the Saudi magazine deceitfully and shamelessly implied that these were young elementary school students who had been forced to wear the *burqa* by the Taliban "extremists"!!!

Resurgence: So what you're saying is that the media has willfully ignored or even distorted the Taliban's position on women's issues?

Adam: Yes! Not only has the media covered up the Taliban's positions



on female education and employment, it has also turned a blind eye to the sincere attempts made by the group to rid society of affronts to women's rights. For example, while in power, the Islamic Emirate—by decree of Ameer-ul-Momineen—banned a number of backward, un-Islamic tribal customs which victimize women, such as the practice known variously as *Ba'ad*, *Swara*, *Vani* or *Badal-i-Sulh*, in which young women or girls—on the orders of tribal councils—are traded as nominal "brides" by their families to settle disputes and feuds with other families. The animosities and grudges held by the girl's new "in-laws" toward her family are then more often than not taken out on her, and she is treated as a virtual slave at best or a punching bag at worst; and that's if she's not horribly mutilated or killed outright.

So the Islamic Emirate decisively banned this and similar barbaric practices way back in 1999, if not earlier than that; in comparison, the current Afghan penal code (originally passed in 1976 and reintroduced after the American invasion) apparently only bans the practice of *Ba'ad/Swara/Badal-i-Sulh* if the woman is 18 years old or a widow. But the problem is that the Islamic Emirate's position on these practices is all but unknown to the outside world, and those who do know about it are not willing to acknowledge it. And this widespread ignorance of the facts has led to a number of surreal "Twilight Zone" moments, such as when certain "Afghanistan experts" last year declared that the Taliban have made "a U-turn (i.e. a complete turnaround) on women's rights", on the basis of a report which quoted a Taliban representative as saying the group would ban the practice of *Ba'ad/Swara* when it returns to power, among other things the Islamic Emirate has all along listed among its principles and/or objectives! Frankly, I don't know what to say to these "experts" and "geniuses" except: wake up and smell the coffee!

Speaking of the *Ba'ad/Swara* issue, I am reminded of the story of Bibi Aisha, the Afghan woman who, after having her nose and ears cut off—allegedly by her "in-laws" to whom she was given in "marriage" as compensation for a killing committed by one of her relatives—was featured on the cover of a 2010 issue of the American magazine Time with the caption "What Happens If We Leave Afghanistan" and an accompanying article entitled "Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban" in which the Taliban were accused of being behind the mutilation of the woman and of supporting these practices in general, and the claim was made that the return of the Taliban meant disaster for Afghan women. Subsequently, however, the involvement of the Taliban or any of its members in the Bibi Aisha case was denied and refuted by a number of independent sources and investigative journalists, including the BBC/Pajhwok correspondent Ahmad Omaid Khpalwak, who—perhaps not coincidentally—was "accidentally" killed in suspicious circumstances by an American soldier a little more than six months after filing the report in which he debunked the Time article (unsurprisingly, his killing was also initially blamed on the Taliban before the truth eventually came out months later).

Similarly, you had the Khataba raid in Paktia province where Crusader special forces carried out a home invasion one night and killed three women—two of them pregnant—and proceeded to cover up their hideous and despicable crime by first digging the American bullets out of the bodies and then claiming in press releases and statements to the media that they had stumbled across the aftermath of a "Taliban honor killing"! Naturally, this bald-faced lie was repeated verbatim and without question—and probably embellished upon too—by the local and international news media, and we would never have known the true story had Allah not decreed that a lone British journalist and his cameraman visit the scene of the crime just as the American and Afghan military delegation which had come to apologize to the family of the victims arrived (keeping in mind that they most likely wouldn't have apologized in the first place were it not for the fact that the house which had been raided belonged to a senior Afghan police commander who had been trained by the Americans themselves).

The point I'm trying to make here is not that the Mujahideen are perfect or don't make mistakes or don't have undisciplined elements in their ranks. Rather, the point I'm trying to make here is twofold: one, the mass media lies with abandon and impunity when it comes to the Mujahideen in general and



the Islamic Emirate in particular; and two, hundreds of thousands of people saw the Time cover—for example— and read the accompanying article with its malicious allegations against the Taliban, and hundreds of thousands of people heard the Crusader version of the Khataba raid, but how many of these people heard the Taliban's side of the story or read the articles or saw the reports and films which exonerated the Taliban and exposed the lies of Time and the Crusaders? Very few, I'm afraid. And the Time article and the NATO cover up of the Khataba raid are just two of thousands of similar defamatory articles, news reports and official press releases. This is why it is so important for us as Muslims and as Mujahideen to fight the media war with every means at our disposal, so that the truth about us and our ideas, actions and objectives is disseminated and becomes available on as wide a scale as possible, and so that people realize the extent of the lies and slander spread by both the enemy forces as well as many of the mainstream corporate media outlets which pretend to adhere to journalistic ethics and standards.

Resurgence: In your view, what is the most distinctive attribute of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, specifically the Taliban under the leadership of *Ameer-ul-Momineen*? What sets the Afghan experience apart from some Jihadi movements in other parts of the world? On the same note, how can the Mujahideen in other parts of the Muslim world benefit from the Afghan experience?

Adam: The Afghan experience is just that: a uniquely Afghan experience which can't be simply transferred or transplanted to other fields of Jihad, because what might be appropriate for Afghanistan and Afghans may not be appropriate for other countries and peoples. That being said, I think there are a number of features of the Afghan experience which can—and should—be emulated or at least taken into consideration by Mujahideen everywhere. For example:

The Jihad in Afghanistan is truly a project of the Mujahid Afghan people and not a select few among them. Yes, there have always been groups and emirates which have led the people and channeled their energies since the time of the Jihad against the British, but the Jihad remains by and large a project of the people. This is in contrast to some other theaters of Jihad where the burden of Jihad is shouldered by a small group and popular support is often hard to come by. I think the Jihad in Syria is the only Jihad in recent years which has come close to matching the Afghan Jihad in this regard.

Similarly, the Afghan Jihad is the Jihad of the entire Ummah, and not just of the Afghans, and it has been this way ever since the Afghans rose up against the Communists and their Soviet backers and Muslims began to arrive from all over the world to help their Afghan brothers; however, this does not take away from the fact that the Afghans have been and still are the leaders of the Jihad and those who shoulder the biggest part of its burden. And in this context, one aspect of the Afghanistan experience which should be repeated in other theaters of Jihad is the relationship between the non-Afghan Mujahideen and *muhajireen* on one hand and the Afghan Mujahideen (whether *muhajireen* or *ansaar*[6]) on the

[6] **Adam adds:** A brief word of advice here for myself and my Mujahid brothers: I believe a serious look must be taken at how we use the terms "*muhajireen*" and "*ansaar*" and how we understand them. It seems to me that many Mujahideen or their supporters today use the word *"muhajir"* to refer to someone who has come to a particular theater of Jihad from beyond the Sykes-Picot borders or Durand lines, while any citizen or national of the country serving as a theater of Jihad is called an *"ansaari"*. So by this definition, a Pakistani or Egyptian national in Afghanistan is a *"muhajir"*, while an Afghan national is an *"ansaari"* even if he has spent most of his life in *hijrah,* having migrated with his family from Afghanistan to Pakistan—for example—to escape the Communists and only returning to wage Jihad

> The Islamic Emirate is distinguished by its balanced, flexible and level-headed Shari'ah-compliant policy program (as-siyaasah al-shar'iyyah), which continues to confound even the most seasoned and experienced analysts and observers.

other, which has been—whether during the Jihad against the Soviets and Communists or during the Jihad of the Islamic Emirate against the Crusaders and their slaves—a relationship based on cooperation, mutual respect and division of duties, not on mutual contempt, rivalry or conflict. The non-Afghans know that their role is to help and support the Afghans in their Jihad against the invaders and sacrifice themselves for them, not to become a burden on them or try to take over the reins of leadership from them. Meanwhile, the Afghans welcome the non-Afghans, appreciate their contributions and consider it their duty to shelter and defend them even at the cost of their lives, and there are numerous examples of that.

To illustrate this point further, the Taliban movement is an indigenous Afghan movement. The Taliban have not rushed to appoint Muslims from other countries as ministers, governors, judges, police officers or members of the commission for the enjoining of virtue and prevention of vice. The role of the non-Afghan *muhajireen* (emigrants) under the Islamic Emirate is limited to things like advice and consultation, *da'wah* and education, training and Jihad, media and publicity, and relief and reconstruction work. This is in contrast to some Jihad movements which—in the name of combating territorial nationalism and uniting the Ummah—deliberately place the *muhajireen* who hail from beyond the borders (or from remote locations inside the country) in sensitive administrative, executive, judicial and leadership roles, which often leads to entirely unnecessary and completely avoidable friction with the *ansaar* (supporters/locals). If a non-local were to be freely chosen for a position by locals because they see him as the best man for the job, there wouldn't be an issue; the problem is when strangers or outsiders are automatically given precedence over locals and placed in sensitive positions despite it being known that such a policy will ruffle local feathers, and despite the fact that the *sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—was to appoint locals as officials and leaders of the various tribes and regions whenever possible.

In general, the Islamic Emirate is distinguished by its balanced, flexible and level-headed Shari'ah-compliant policy program *(as-siyaasah al-shar'iyyah)*. The Islamic Emirate under the command of Ameer-ul-Momineen Mulla Muhammad Umar Mujahid has formulated and adopted—by

> **In the Emirate, the 'Ulama are leaders and not led**

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against the occupiers. In fact, even if he only migrated from Kabul—for example—to one of the Afghan provinces where the Mujahideen are based, he is still deserving of being called a *muhajir* and receiving the reward of *hijrah*. Yet for some of us he will always be an "*ansaari*"! And this oversimplified definition is complicated and compounded by the regrettable fact that some among us—apparently—have the mistaken idea that *"muhajireen"* are superior to the *"ansaar"* (to the extent of sometimes elevating *"muhajireen"* almost to the level of infallibility!) when in fact these names are merely honorific titles which do not have any connection with or bearing on the superiority or inferiority of those who bear them, and partisanship on their basis has been clearly forbidden by our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. And on the basis of these mistaken concepts, we have seen recently-arrived *"muhajireen"*—who a few months ago may not have even been regular in performing their prayers—being preferred to and given precedence over *"ansaar"* who are passed over or looked down upon despite having spent literally decades of their lives in *hijrah,* Jihad and Islamic work. This mixed-up and upside-down way of looking at things is one of the factors that have led to catastrophes and disasters like the one we saw most recently in Syria, where the blood of *"ansaar"* like Shaykh Abu Khalid al-Suri—may Allah accept him—was considered by some to be less valuable then the blood of *"muhajireen"* many of whom—despite our respect for the sanctity of all Mujahideen and sadness at any strife between them and any spilling of innocent Muslim blood—don't even come close to matching the status of Shaykh Abu Khalid much less exceeding him in status and importance. So let's be more careful about how we use, define and understand terms like *"muhajireen" "ansaar"* and other Islamic terms and concepts; let us give people the respect and status they deserve; and let's avoid fanaticism and partisanship in all its forms and manifestations.

Taliban are masters of politics and diplomacy within the limits laid down by Islam. The Islamic Emirate which has always made clear that it wants good relations with other countries is the same Islamic Emirate which destroyed the idols at Bamiyan and elsewhere despite vocal international opposition and refused to bow to pressure to give up Shaykh Usama bin Ladin.

the grace of Allah—an approach to policy which continues to confound even the most seasoned and experienced analysts and observers. And—I think—there are number of lessons in this approach which Mujahideen everywhere could benefit from in formulating the policies which govern their actions.

For example, the leadership of the Islamic Emirate is by and large in the hands of the 'Ulama and *Talabah* (students of knowledge), which is how the Islamic system is supposed to be, and which leads automatically to a lot of mistakes being avoided or prevented. In the Emirate, **the 'Ulama are leaders and not led; that is to say, they influence, make and review the decisions of the leadership and aren't merely there to rubber-stamp and legitimize the edicts, decisions and policies of others.**

Similarly, the 'Ulama—in their capacity as representatives of the Muslim Ummah in Afghanistan—elected Mulla Muhammad Umar as Ameer-ul-Momineen of their own free will; he did not force himself on the people under the pretext that his history of Jihad, the sacrifices he made and the way he—by the grace of Allah—rallied the students to fight and defeat the warlords automatically made him the only legitimate ruler of Afghanistan!

In general, the Islamic Emirate did not try to impose a new *madhhab* or unfamiliar form of Islam on the Afghans, regardless of any claims to the contrary. Ameer-ul-Momineen and the vast majority of the Taliban are Afghans of the Hanafi *madhhab*, with a few exceptions such as the Taliban of Nuristan, where Salafism is traditionally dominant.

The Islamic Emirate has been careful to avoid making too many enemies and keen not to open too many fronts at once. You can see that clearly in its media campaign and the statements of its spokesman. It's also evident in some of its policies on the ground. For example, the Emirate has been very cautious about changing some widespread *munkaraat* (evils) because they know that they might not be able to withstand or endure the negative reactions changing them would incur. That's why they haven't—for the most part—destroyed raised and decorated tombs and shrines (even though their Hanafi *madhhab* does not permit a grave to be raised higher than two hand spans) in recognition of the fact that changing Afghans' beliefs and traditions in this regard will require years and perhaps decades of Da'wah and education before they will be ready for such a step. That's not to say that the Emirate hasn't taken steps to close some shrines and demolish others, but in general the process has been slow and gradual, which may be partly due to the fact that the Emirate since its inception has been preoccupied with a continuous war which may not provide the best conditions for educating the masses about such issues.

The Emirate has also become known for enforcing strict discipline and adherence to the commandments of Shari'ah in its ranks, particularly in the areas fully under its control, and is more than willing to take its own personnel to account when they make mistakes or commit crimes. Sometimes this even means unceremonious dismissal of senior officials or field commanders for what some other groups might consider minor infractions. To illustrate this point, I'll relate one incident I heard about from some of the brothers: a commander with over 200 men under his command executed a man for being an enemy spy without first bringing him before the Qadi (judge) to be tried and getting permission from those above him in the command chain. This resulted in this commander being dismissed immediately by his superiors even before his case was referred to the Shari'ah court (eventually it was determined that the executed man was in fact a spy, which saved the former commander from judicial punishment, but still he wasn't reinstated to his former position). Another time a commander was accused by a villager of taking one of his chickens. The commander was ordered to return the chicken at once or reimburse the villager to his satisfaction, and immediately after doing so, he was given his walking papers.

If this level of discipline and way of doing things is maintained, I believe it will—with Allah's permission—be a cause of the Islamic Emirate's victory and empowerment and make it an

example for other Islamic groups and governments to emulate.

Meanwhile, the Taliban are masters of politics and diplomacy within the limits laid down by Islam. For example, the Islamic Emirate which has always made clear that it wants good relations with other countries is the same Islamic Emirate which destroyed the idols at Bamiyan and elsewhere despite vocal international opposition and refused to bow to pressure to give up Shaykh Usama bin Ladin—may Allah have mercy on him—and his brothers even if it meant giving up power in Afghanistan, because it knows that handing over Muslims to their enemies is a violation of Shari'ah. This is in contrast to some "Islamic" movements and governments who think that abandoning Muslims to the Kuffaar and abandoning even the most basic tenets of Islam under external pressure is evidence of political acumen and diplomatic expertise!

The Taliban are also masters of strategy, and know when to play it soft and when—and how—to play it hard. For example, the Islamic Emirate which released Yvonne Ridley after a few days is the same Islamic Emirate which held onto Bowe Bergdahl for 5 long years until America was forced to come to the negotiating table and meekly comply with the conditions dictated by the Emirate.

In conclusion, the Mujahideen everywhere should benefit from the Afghan experience by deferring to the 'Ulama and Shari'ah at all junctures, holding themselves to account before they hold others to account, respecting local sensitivities and *madhhabs*, properly balancing the relationship between the *muhajireen* and *ansaar*, practicing politics and diplomacy within the guidelines of Islam, and cultivating and preserving popular support wherever possible, so that the Jihad becomes a popular movement and not just the uphill battle of an elite few, and so that the Mujahideen are able to achieve their goals and objectives as soon as possible with as few losses and setbacks as possible.

Resurgence: On the topic of the need for the Mujahideen to cultivate and preserve a measure of popular support, or what is known in Arabic as *al-haadinatul-shabiyyah* (الحاضنة الشعبية): as you mentioned earlier, some people belittle the importance of it or even cast doubt on its legitimacy, going so far as to call it a *mughaalatah* (a fallacy or sophism) which—according to them—is contrary to Islamic texts which tell us that the people of Truth are generally few and far between and strangers among their own people, as well as historical and modern-day experience which—again, according to them—has demonstrated that the peoples are fickle friends who one can't depend on for support in one's hour of need. How do you respond to the naysayers?

Adam: When we talk about the need for a popular support base for the Mujahideen, we are talking about a need which has been identified, confirmed and emphasized by numerous leaders and scholars of the Mujahideen who know full well what they're talking about, people like Shaykh Usama bin Ladin, Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri, Shaykh Abdullah Azzam, Shaykh Attiyatullah al-Leebi, Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, and countless others with years and decades of on-the-ground experience in Jihad and Islamic work, and therefore I



The guerrilla force, in its capacity as the vanguard of revolutionary change, must strive to make itself and its objectives a focal point around which the discontent and unrest of the populace can coalesce, thus turning the fight of a few into the fight of many.

think it's safe to say that their views on this issue and others relating to Jihad are deserving of being listened to, respected and heeded.

The importance accorded to the popular support base by these Shaykhs is due to the fact that 95 percent of our Jihad today is conducted through guerrilla (asymmetric) warfare and not conventional warfare in which two regular armies face off against each other; and one of the basic principles of guerrilla warfare is preservation of a popular support base in which the irregular army can live, train and resupply itself and from where it can set out to carry out operations against the enemies. This is because the guerrilla force, unlike a conventional army, neither controls land or sea nor owns fortified military bases to which a regular army is able to retreat; and this is why the guerrilla army needs the support of the populace to continue to operate.

Another principle or strategy of guerrilla warfare theory states that the guerrilla force, in its capacity as the vanguard of revolutionary change, must strive to make itself and its objectives a focal point around which the discontent and unrest of the populace can coalesce, thus turning the fight of a few into the fight of many, paving the way for mass insurrection against the system and leading eventually to regime change.

So when our leaders and scholars talk about popular support bases, what exactly are they talking about? They are **not** talking about abandoning constants of Islamic doctrine and law in order to curry popular favor! Rather, they are talking about using all Islamically-legitimate means (from *Da'wah*, *Tableegh* and *Bayaan* to spending in the Path of Allah) to win hearts and minds and achieve and preserve that level and amount of popular support within the Ummah which is necessary for the Mujahideen's guerrilla armies to work and operate in effectively and successfully. They are talking about making every effort to get the entire Ummah (if possible) to rally behind us and join us, or at the very least support us with its *du'aa* (prayers). They are talking about transforming the objectives of the Mujahideen into popular demands and making the Jihadi vanguard the detonator that ignites the main charge and activates the Ummah's latent potentials and powers, thereby turning the tables on the enemies of Islam and Muslims.

From this it becomes clear that for us as Mujahideen, the popular

> [The popular support base is a means to an end and not an end in and of itself; but at the same time, working to build and maintain it is obligatory]



support base is a means to an end and not an end in and of itself; but at the same time, working to build and maintain it is obligatory, because the fundamental of Fiqh says, "What is indispensible for completing or fulfilling the obligation is itself obligatory." Therefore, taking the matter of the popular support base lightly is not an option; in fact, to ignore it is a form of negligence and shirking of Islamic duty and responsibility, because the popular support base gives us strength, and Allah has commanded us to muster all the strength we can:

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ﴾

"Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides them whom you may not know, but whom Allah knows. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah shall be repaid to you, and you shall not be treated unjustly." (al-Anfaal, Ayah 60)

As for the texts which talk about the fewness and strangeness of the people of Truth, these texts are simply describing a fact—that Truth and its people generally suffer from *ghurbah* (alienation)—and giving glad tidings to those who suffer from alienation on their way to Allah and persevere despite the hardship and adversity. These texts shouldn't be interpreted to mean that alienation or lack of numbers are necessarily positive things or things to be sought after, nor should ghurbah and fewness be understood to be the defining attribute of the people of Truth. Or to put it another way, the fact that a particular group is few in number and lacking in popularity doesn't necessarily mean that it is on the truth or closer to the truth than others (just as numerousness and large numbers of supporters aren't indicators of truth), nor is fewness in and of itself something to be sought after (just as numerousness isn't an objective in and of itself). So we shouldn't make numbers or popularity the standards by which we judge ourselves or others, much less make it our objective to remain as few as possible—or as unpopular as possible!—when everyone with a head on his shoulders knows there is strength in numbers and popular support!

Alienation or lack of numbers are not necessarily positive things or things to be sought after, nor should ghurbah and fewness be understood to be the defining attribute of the people of Truth.

Moreover, even if we were to suppose (for argument's sake) that these texts mean that *ghurbah* and fewness is a constant and unchanging attribute of the people of Truth, then there is still no contradiction between these texts and between the concept of the popular support base, because *ghurbah* and fewness are relative, and after all is said and done, even if we and our supporters number in the millions, we will still be no more than a relatively tiny and strange ship of truth sailing in the midst of a raging sea of ignorance and falsehood. Look at the Muslim Ummah itself: it today numbers about a billion and a half and yet it's still seen as an alien minority by the rest of the nations. So from this perspective, every Muslim on earth is one of the *Ghurabaa* about whom the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, *"Fa Tooba lil-Ghurabaa"*!

As I said, the popular support base is a means to an end and a necessity of our Jihad today, and that's why I honestly don't see much difference between someone who denies the need for a popular support base and someone who denies the need for modern weapons like guns and bombs and calls for Muslims to fight the enemies with swords and spears on the basis that what was enough for our Salaf (predecessors) is enough for us!

Resurgence: You brought up the issue of treatment of captives while comparing the Islamic Emirate with other Jihad movements around the world. It may seem odd to dwell on such a topic at a time when innocent Muslims are being kidnapped, raped, butchered and bombed to bits at the hands of the unbelievers and apostates in Afghanistan, Arakan, Assam, Bangladesh, the Caucasus, the Central African Republic, East Turkistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Tunisia, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen (to name just a few places), but what is your comment on the killing of the British hostage and volunteer aid worker Alan Henning by the Islamic State faction in Syria?

Adam: My comment is that it was a blatant and apparently deliberate violation of what we have been taught by the 'Ulama of the Mujahideen and leaders of Jihad, which is that Islam doesn't call on us to treat all unbelievers alike; rather, Islam calls on us to treat individuals fairly and equitably and return favors in kind, even if these individuals

belong to a people at war with us; and this is the *sunnah* (Tradition or Way) of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Shaykh Abdullah Azzam says in his exegesis, "In the Shade of Surah al-Tawbah":

"The Negus [ruler of Abyssinia] was a Kaafir (unbeliever), and Abu Jahl was a Kaafir, but the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said [to his Companions who were being persecuted], 'Go to this man [i.e. the Negus, to seek refuge with him] for no one is wronged under his rule.' To who? To the Negus, who was a Christian.

"Al-Mut'im bin 'Adee [a Quraishite who died a polytheist] sheltered the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he returned from al-Taa'if. So the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was under his protection, and that's why on the day of the battle of Badr, when he captured 70 Quraishites, he said, 'If al-Mut'im bin 'Adee had been alive today and interceded with me on behalf of these foul-smelling people, I would have let them go for his sake.' (Saheeh of Bukhari)[…] Thus, the Muslim's dealings with the Kaafir or the non-Muslim must be commensurate with the degree of his hurting and offending the Islamic Da'wah (call)."

And he says in "Jihad: *Fiqh* and *Ijtihaad*":

"So the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was only able to enter Makkah under the protection of al-Mut'im bin 'Adee, and the Messenger didn't forget this noble deed, because on the day of the battle of Badr after taking the seventy captives, he said, 'If al-Mut'im bin 'Adee had been alive today and interceded with me on behalf of these foul-smelling people, I would have let them go for his sake.' In other words, had al-Mut'im bin 'Adee still been alive and asked me to release these captives, I would have let them go for his sake to repay the debt, because Islam remembers favors, and Islam is made up of fulfillment of dues and debts, made up of humanity and philanthropy, and made up of good and positive interactions."

And Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (may Allah preserve him) says in his book *"al-Risaalah al-Thalaatheeniyah fit-Tahdheer min al-Guloo' fit-Takfeer"*:

"Similarly, thanking them [i.e. unbelievers or apostates] by words or deeds, such as returning the favor they have done to the Muslim in kind: there is no sin in this either.

"The evidence for the first [i.e. thanking them verbally] is the general nature of the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'He who doesn't thank the people doesn't thank Allah.' (Narrated by Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi, who declared it authentic)

"As for the second [i.e. thanking them with actions], its evidence is in the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in reference to the captives of Badr, 'If al-Mut'im bin 'Adee had been alive today and interceded with me on behalf of these foul-smelling people, I would have let them go for his sake.' (Narrated by Al-Bukhari from Jubair bin Mut'im)

"This was because al-Mut'im bin 'Adee was one of the noblemen of Quraish, and had rendered a service to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as he had given him safe haven when he returned from al-Taa'if where he had gone to give Da'wah to the tribe of Thaqeef. Al-Mut'im was also one of those who worked for the annulment and tearing up of the document that Quraish drew up against Banu Hashim [i.e the document which placed a ban on Banu Hashim]; and he died about seven months before Badr.

"So the statement of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a sort of reward to al-Mut'im and an expression of thanks for his charity and kindness […]

"Similar to this is his (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibiting the killing of Abu al-Bakhtari bin Hisham in the battle of Badr despite him being a Kaafir (unbeliever) with no covenant of security, due to his having refrained from harming him and the kindness he showed in striving to annul the document of oppression.

"Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned this in al-Saarim al-Maslool pg. 163 and also mentioned the Hadeeth of al-Mut'im, and then said, 'He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would reward the one who was kind to him for his kindness, even if he was a Kaafir (unbeliever)."

This is why I say it is not only wrong from a political perspective but also contrary to the Prophetic *Sunnah* to treat an individual who is known (as in the case of Alan Henning) to be sympathetic towards Islam or Muslims or their causes the same way we would treat a belligerent, even if this individual be a British or American unbeliever or even an Israeli, and even if he is not known to have an explicit covenant of security with the Muslims; so what if it is apparent that such a covenant with him exists, as in the case of Henning?! There is no doubt that to kill him then is not simply a contradiction of the Sunnah or a political gaffe, but is in fact a major sin with a punishment which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned us about in his statement, "Whoever kills a Mu'aahad (Kaafir with a covenant of security or safe-conduct) won't smell the fragrance

of Paradise, although its fragrance is perceptible at the distance of a 40-year march." (Related by al-Bukhari) That is to say, the person who kills a Kaafir despite him having a covenant won't enter Paradise nor even come close to entering Paradise.

Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi says in an article with a publishing date of September 18, 2014 entitled "The Refutation and Disavowal Against He Who Kidnaps or Kills Relief Workers Even if They Are Unbelievers":

"A few days ago, the [Islamic] State organization slaughtered a British hostage who the press said was working in the field of relief. Regardless of the credibility of those reports, the slaughterers threatened in the same video clip to slaughter another Briton named Alan Henning, and the information we have received confirms that this man was a volunteer driver in a humanitarian convoy sent by a charitable foundation in Britain called al-Fatihah, which had already sent several humanitarian convoys loaded with medicines and other relief supplies for the Syrian people. We have seen pictures of the work this relief foundation does and this man's work with it, and Qatada, son of Shaykh Abu Qatada al-Filisteeni […], informed me that his father had written to the State organization eight months ago asking them to release this man, which not only didn't happen, they even denied that he was in their custody! Then we were surprised by their threat to slaughter this man in the video in which the first Briton was slaughtered.

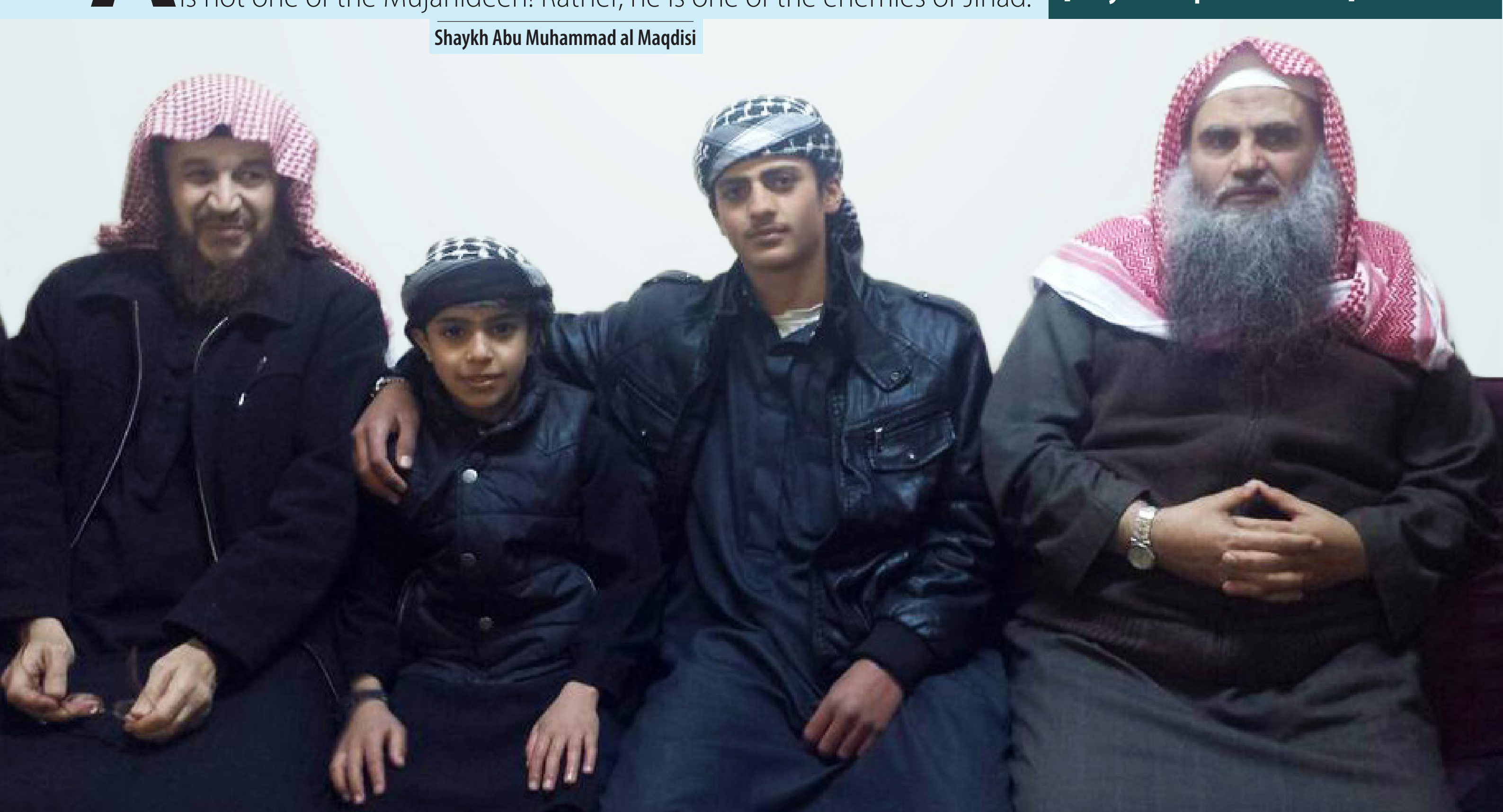
"Qatada also mentioned to me that this foundation in whose convoy the Briton came is run by a Muslim who he knows and who is now under arrest in Britain because of his sending these sorts of caravans.

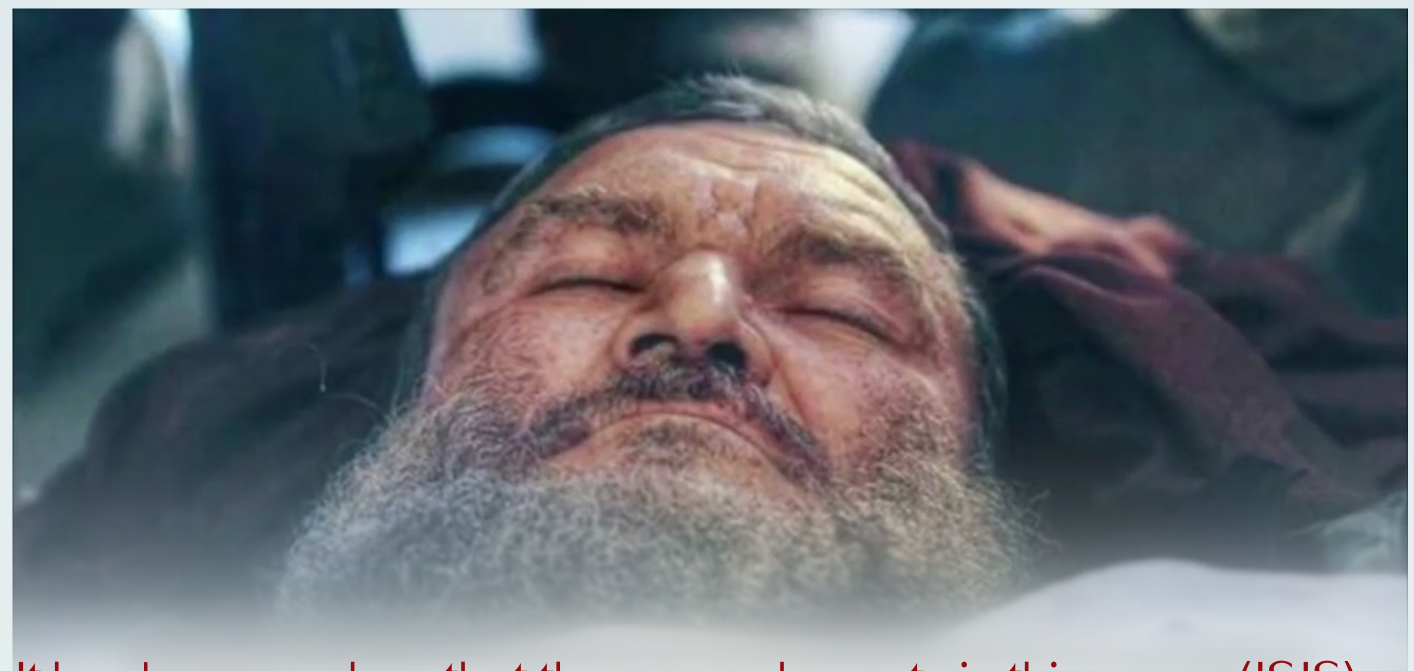
"So we say to the State group: Fear Allah in respect to the Muslims, and fear Allah in respect to Jihad and the Mujahideen. The issue isn't a Briton or defense of Britain as some fools make it out to be. We are not siding with Britain or defending it, for Britain has killed thousands of Muslims and wronged millions more with its planting of the Jewish entity in the heart of the Muslim lands. Rather, the issue is one of defending Islam and preventing the Jihad from being defaced and defamed.

"The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'The Muslims' blood is equal, **and the protection accorded by (even) the lowest among them (i.e. in social standing) is binding on all of them***, and they are as one against those other than them.' This man came as a volunteer with an aid foundation run by Muslims, so these Muslims should be respected, and their giving protection to this man who came to aid and relieve the Syrian people should be respected. He was given a covenant of security by the Muslims who he came with, and he was also given a covenant of security by the Muslims in the Levant whose territories he entered with their permission, so is it logical that his reward be kidnapping and slaughter?! Even though he came to help the Muslims and give them*

> As for he who doesn't distinguish in his Jihad between this and that and treats everyone alike, he is not one of the Mujahideen. No, by Allah, he is not one of the Mujahideen! Rather, he is one of the enemies of Jihad.
>
> Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi

Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi (left) and Shaykh Abu Qatada (right) [may Allah protect them]





It has become clear that there are elements in this group (ISIS)—and in its senior leadership—who have little or no respect for the sanctity of Muslim life

relief, which is sufficient for him to be received with thanks, not with slaughter and the oppression which Allah does not like! […]

"This is a peaceful man helping the Muslims who has nothing to do with the oppression and aggression the state he belongs to is committing against the Muslims, so they [i.e. those holding him] and all Muslims must differentiate between—on one hand—people like him who haven't come to trespass against the Muslims and—on the other hand—the trespassers, just as our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) differentiated between the trespasser and belligerent 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'eet and his ilk and the helper and provider of relief al-Mut'im bin 'Adee, although both men were polytheist idol-worshippers.

"As for he who doesn't distinguish in his Jihad between this and that and treats everyone alike, he is not one of the Mujahideen. No, by Allah, he is not one of the Mujahideen! Rather, he is one of the enemies of Jihad who are working to defame it and repel people from it, whether he realizes it or not."

To sum up then, Alan Henning didn't go to Syria as a soldier or a spy. He went to Syria as a member of a Muslim aid convoy to distribute relief supplies to displaced and needy Syrians. But rather than thank him, some interlopers rewarded him by first kidnapping him and then slaughtering him on camera, in spite of the appeals from hundreds of 'Ulama, Mujahideen and other Muslims to spare him, appeals such as the one made by Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi both in the article I just quoted from as well as in a subsequent article of his published on September 23, 2014 entitled "O Allah, Grant Victory to the Mujahideen, Deliver the Weak and Oppressed Muslims and Defeat the Crusaders and Apostates." As for us in al-Qa'eda, we have already made our position clear on the issue of how Mujahideen should treat those who help Muslims or sympathize with their causes, regardless of whether they have been given explicit covenants of security or not; and this position is spelled out in Shaykh Ayman's *General Guidelines for Jihadi Work*, which was released to the public in September 2013. And it was on the basis of these guidelines and the basis of Islamic principles that the brothers in An-Nusra Front (al-Qa'eda's branch in Syria) sought the release of Henning soon after his kidnapping, but regrettably, their appeals—like the rest—fell on deaf ears.

And here another difference between the actions of the group behind his killing on one hand and Islamic precepts and precedents on the other becomes evident. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was prepared to release 70 captive infidel warriors who had been captured on the battlefield after engaging in armed combat with the Muslims if one **infidel** had interceded on their behalf. In contrast, this group arrogantly refused to release one noncom-

batant unbeliever despite the hundreds and even thousands of appeals for his release by Mujahideen, 'Ulama and other Muslims.

Resurgence: And more recently it has been reported that this group has also slaughtered an American aid worker named Peter Cossack, who is said to have embraced Islam after being captured and changed his name to 'Abd al-Rahman and begun praying five times a day and fasting on Mondays and Thursdays!

Adam: Yes, I've heard these reports, and I've also heard that our brothers in Al-Nusra Front had demanded his release as well, but regrettably, I don't have enough details at the moment to be able to comment at length on this issue. However, it wouldn't surprise me at all if the reports of him being killed despite embracing Islam are true, because this group, Islamic State, is already known to be responsible for the murder and killing of a large number of Muslims on the flimsiest of pretexts, including many Mujahideen and their supporters. It has become clear that there are elements in this group—and in its senior leadership—who have little or no respect for the sanctity of Muslim life, and for whom declaring a Muslim to be outside the fold of Islam and spilling his blood is as easy as saying "al-Salaamu 'Alaykum"!

Anyway, if the reports are true, then we ask Allah to have mercy on 'Abd al-Rahman and give his murderers what they deserve.

Resurgence: Perhaps it would be helpful at this juncture to provide a little background on this group (Islamic State) and summarize what it has been doing in the Iraq/Syria region over the past few months and years, for the benefit of any of our readers who may not have been following the news closely.

Adam: OK. To make a long story as short as possible, in 2004, Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (may Allah have mercy on him), leader of the Tawheed wal-Jihad Group in Iraq, pledged allegiance to the leadership of Qa'eda al-Jihad Group, and his group became known thereafter as al-Qa'eda in Mesopotamia. This group, both before and after the pledge of allegiance, was one of the most lethal and effective forces fighting the Crusader/Rafidite Shi'ite occupation of Iraq.

After Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's martyrdom in 2006, leadership of his group was transferred to Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (may Allah have mercy on him), a former member of the Egyptian Jihad Group, who soon announced (without consulting al-Qa'eda's central command) the dissolution of the group and the formation of what was known as the Islamic State of Iraq under the leadership of Shaykh Abu 'Umar al-Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him), which in turn declared its allegiance to al-Qa'eda's central command, except that this time the *bay'at* (pledge) was kept secret **at the request of the brothers in Iraq.**

The ISI was controversial from the outset and many in Iraq and elsewhere felt that the way it was declared and some of the policies it had were detrimental to the interests of the Jihad and Mujahideen, but despite this, the leadership of al-Qa'eda continued to support the ISI while at the same time providing advice and instructions and working for reform behind the scenes.

Then in 2010, Shaykh Abu 'Umar al-Baghdadi and Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir were martyred (may Allah have mercy on them). Following their martyrdom, a new leadership of the ISI emerged, one largely unknown to al-Qa'eda's central command. This new leadership (led by one Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) also pledged its allegiance to al-Qa'eda and stated unambiguously that it was at the beck and call of al-Qa'eda's leaders.

Almost immediately, signs began to appear that this new leadership of the ISI was not of the same caliber as the old leadership.

2004 Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (may Allah have mercy on him), leader of the Tawheed wal-Jihad Group in Iraq, pledged allegiance to the leadership of Qa'eda al-Jihad Group, and his group became known thereafter as al-Qa'eda in Mesopotamia.

2006 Leadership of this group was transferred to Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (may Allah have mercy on him), who declared allegiance to al-Qa'eda's central command, except that this time the group's bay'at was kept secret at the request of the brothers in Iraq.

2010 A new leadership of the ISI emerged, one largely unknown to al-Qa'eda's central command.

2013 Al-Baghdadi and his aides proceeded to "solve" their internal organizational problems by creating a new and much bigger problem with negative and far-reaching implications for the Syrian Jihad and the Ummah.

However, al-Qa'eda was as patient as ever and continued its dual policy of support and advice.

In early 2013, following a dispute between the leadership of the Islamic State group and some of its commanders and fighters whom it had sent to help support the popular revolution in Syria and defend the Muslims there from the brutality of the Nusayrite and Rafidites, al-Baghdadi and his aides arrived in Syria and proceeded to "solve" their internal organizational problems by creating a new and much bigger problem with negative and far-reaching implications for the Syrian Jihad and the Ummah as a whole. Their "solution" was to declare a new "state" in Syria and Iraq called the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (the Levant), also known as ISIS. This unilateral declaration of another "state" (again made without consultation with al-Qa'eda's central command) was met with shock and outrage from almost all quarters in Syria, and was seen as both a gift to the enemies as well as an attempt by a single organization to hijack the Syrian Jihad and steal its fruits.

Almost as soon as al-Baghdadi and his commanders arrived in Syria—and especially after the announcement of ISIS—tensions ran high between them and the other groups of Mujahideen in Syria, most of which ISIS accused right off the bat of being *Bughaat* (rebels), deviants, agents of foreign powers or *"Sahawaat"* ("Awakening Councils") like the ones formed by the Americans and their proxies during the occupation of Iraq to fight the Mujahideen; in other words, they accused them of being apostates! The situation on the ground soon deteriorated to the point of fighting and bloodshed, especially after the ISIS people began stealing weapons, ammunitions and supplies meant for the Mujahideen on the frontline of the war against the regime and taking over their bases, warehouses, and supply depots; killing and kidnapping commanders and fighters from the other groups on various pretexts; and targeting hundreds of local activists, relief workers and media personnel affiliated with the Syrian revolution for detention and disappearance.

Eventually, this low-level conflict exploded in January of 2014 into all-out warfare between ISIS on one side and many of the Syrian Mujahideen and revolutionaries on the other, who felt they had no choice but to defend themselves and their Jihad against the brazen aggression of ISIS, whose ranks were now swelled by thousands of fighters from other countries who had joined it after arriving in Syria, and who now, instead of helping the Muslims in Syria defend themselves against the murderous regime and topple it (and they will topple it soon, Allah willing), were now posing—through their behavior—an obstacle to the Jihad in Syria. As the number of Syrians in ISIS' ranks was and is relatively small, ISIS was able to portray what was happening as an attack on the *"muhajireen"*, which was not the case; rather, it was a campaign meant to defend the Jihad in Syria and prevent it from being derailed, and the fact that ISIS was made up primarily of non-Syrians was incidental: i.e., if a 100% Syrian group had behaved the way ISIS behaved, it would have been met with the same response.

Even before the full-blown fighting started, numerous attempts had been made by third parties to prevent the strife from escalating further and have disputes settled in an independent Shari'ah court; and these attempts to bring the strife to a halt intensified after the major battles began in January. But everyone who intervened eventually came to the same conclusion: that one faction—ISIS—had no intention of ending the *fitnah* (strife) nor of abiding by the rulings of Shari'ah in its disputes with other Muslims and Mujahideen, prompting even some of those who had once been its biggest sympathizers to distance themselves from it after they realized the true nature of the group and its un-Islamic use of deception and deceit.

And so, due to ISIS's evasiveness and unwillingness to compromise, the fighting raged on and

ISIS carried out in the space of a few weeks no less than 24 suicide bombings against headquarters and checkpoints of the other groups in Syria.

ISIS's categorizing of the other Mujahideen in Syria as apostates is now official and no longer an open secret. This labeling of others as apostates has also extended to the brothers in the Nusra Front and then to al-Qa'eda in general.

thousands fell on both sides; and to give you an idea of the nature of the strife and the way ISIS has behaved during it, ISIS carried out in the space of a few weeks no less than 24 suicide bombings against headquarters and checkpoints of the other groups in Syria, as opposed to the mere 8 martyrdom operations it carried out against targets of the Syrian regime in the months between ISIS's arrival in Syria and the strife that began in January 2014. Also, the indiscriminate killing and wholesale massacres have not been limited to rival Mujahideen, but have included even unarmed Muslims in areas where fighting is under way, such as the videotaped massacre of a group of Syrians—including children—in a village near Aleppo by a Russian-speaking unit of ISIS under the command of Abu Usaid al-Uzbeki, and the massacre of hundreds of members of a single clan over a period of weeks in the province of Deir-az-Zawr near the border with Iraq.

As for the leaders and commanders of the Mujahideen whom ISIS has admitted to killing (or at least not denied killing), they include Shaykh Abu Khalid al-Suri—former deputy of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri—Abu 'Ubaidah al-Binshi, Muhammad Faaris, Dr. Abu Rayyan and Commander Abu Mihjan of the group Ahraar-ul-Sham; Abu Sa'ad al-Hadhrami and Abu Muhammad al-Fatih of the Nusra Front (al-Qa'eda's branch in Syria) as well as al-Fatih's brother and their wives and children; and others too many to mention here.

As for ISIS's categorizing of the other Mujahideen in Syria as apostates, it is now official and no longer an open secret; see, for example, the communiqué of the ISIS Shari'ah Council dated 16 Jumaada al-Aakhar 1435, which declares the leadership and most of the members of the Islamic

If we truly want to achieve reform and success, and if we truly want to do justice to the sacrifices of the martyrs and captives then we must call a spade a spade, a deviation a deviation and a mistake a mistake, and we must explain frankly and clearly the difference between right and wrong.

Front (one of the largest unions of Mujahideen in Syria) to be apostates, and legitimized fighting them like apostates are fought, all on the basis of classic *Takfeeri* logic and arguments. This labeling of others as apostates has also extended to the brothers in the Nusra Front and then to al-Qa'eda in general, after al-Qa'eda cut its ties with the Iraqi branch, made it clear that it wasn't going to stand by it in this *fitnah*, and denounced ISIS's baseless *Takfeer* of Muslims, its killing and fighting of them without right and its refusal to arbitrate by Shari'ah in its disputes.

This, then, is the sad story of the Islamic State group in brief, and the story is still unfolding; and one of the most recent deviations of this group is its unilateral declaration of a "caliphate" (with its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi playing the role of "caliph,") while at the same time calling on all other groups of Mujahideen to pledge allegiance to it and openly claiming that the *bay'ats* (pledges of allegiance) of other groups are *baatil* (null and void) wherever its soldiers are to be found!

Resurgence: Please sum up the most prominent or important deviations of the Islamic State group in as few words as possible.

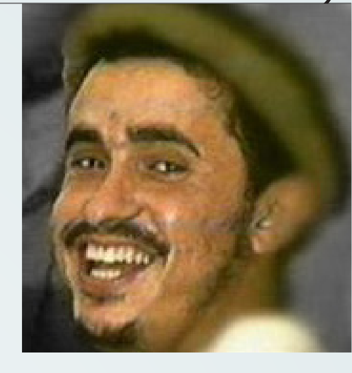
Adam: OK, but before I do so, I think it is important to emphasize to the readers and to our brothers in Iraq, Syria and everywhere else that it is not our intent today to belittle the Jihad and sacrifices of any person or persons or deny anyone their due or diminish from any achievements they may have made or imply that they have no positive side, nor do we mean to portray them as having perished. No! ***"Allah does not let the reward of those who do good go to waste,"*** (Qur'an 9:120) and: "If someone says the people have been ruined, he is the most ruined of them" (Saheeh Muslim). Allah knows that we do not like to focus on the flaws and shortcomings of any Muslim, much less a group which includes in its ranks hundreds if not thousands of Mujahideen. However, if we truly want to achieve reform and success, and if we truly want to do justice to the sacrifices of the martyrs and captives and complete the mission started by those Mujahideen who went before us, then we must call a spade a spade, a deviation a deviation and a mistake a mistake, and we must explain frankly and clearly the difference between right and wrong, and we must do what is necessary to stop the oppressor from his oppression and the wrongdoer from his wrongdoing, and we must warn our Ummah against helping him as long as he persists in his oppres-

sion and wrongdoing. Otherwise, we will be doomed to repeat our own mistakes and the mistakes of others over and over again, and lasting victory and success will continue to elude us, and Allah will hold us to account in this world and the next.

As for the most prominent and dangerous deviations of the Islamic State group, they are as follows:

- First, committing murder, oppression and injustice against Muslims and Mujahideen.
- Second, refusing to stop fighting with other Mujahideen and agree to abide by the rulings of Shari'ah in its disputes with them.
- Third, disregarding the rulings, opinions and advice of **all** the well-known 'Ulama of the Mujahideen.
- Fourth, *ghuloo* (extremism) in *Takfeer* (this being perhaps the root cause of all the other deviations).
- Fifth, changing the direction of the fighting from the primary threats to Islam and Muslims in order to focus on conflicts with other groups of Muslims, or at best, on secondary threats and enemies.
- Sixth, trying to force itself on the Muslims as their governing body and considering its *ameer* to be their legitimate ruler without consulting the representatives of the Ummah or getting their approval.
- And seventh, spreading *fitnah* and dissent within the groups of Mujahideen in the various theaters of Jihad and attempting to split their ranks.

Resurgence: Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi: a name the mere mention of which strikes terror into the hearts of Americans and other unbelievers. You had personal contact with Shaykh Abu Mus'ab. Could you share your memories of the flesh-and-blood person behind this name?



Adam: The first time I met Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi (may Allah have mercy on him) was in early 1999, at the house of Abu 'Aa'id al-Filisteeni (may Allah have mercy on him). This would have been just a few months after Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's release from prison in Jordan following the death of the Jordanian king Hussein. Then over the next few months and years, I would see him at various places around Afghanistan. For instance, I remember seeing him when I was at Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir's Shari'ah Institute at Khalden. I remember he came along with Shaykh Mansoor al-Shami (may Allah have mercy on him) and Shaykh Mansoor's brother in law Abu Anas and Abu Islam al-Jayyousi and his son Islam, all of whom I think had just arrived from Jordan, and they would sit with Shaykh Abu Abdullah and discuss the situation of the Ummah, and as you may know, Shaykh Abu Mus'ab was very impressed by Shaykh Abu Abdullah and was affected deeply by him, and would later invite him to teach at his own camp in Herat.

Another time I went along with Brother Abu Zubaidah for breakfast at Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's house in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood of Kabul. Abu Zubaidah had this "official policy" that if someone invited him anywhere as a guest, he would only accept on the condition that he bring with him all the brothers staying with him at his guesthouse. And usually that would be between ten to fifteen brothers! But that didn't stop people from inviting him, because the Mujahideen are in general a generous lot. So while I was staying with Abu Zubaidah, Shaykh Abu Dujaana al-Pasha invited us to dinner, and a few days later, Shaykh Abu Mus'ab invited us to breakfast, which of course was a traditional Levantine breakfast, you know with a lot of little dishes swimming in olive oil, which was a welcome break from the basic fare to which we were accustomed.

As Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi said, Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi had the qualities needed to be a leader. That was obvious, and can be seen clearly in one of the fondest and most vivid memories I have of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab: an unplanned encounter I had with him in Kabul in early 2001. I had gone into what is known around here as a PCO (public call office) to make a phone call to my editor in Qandahar to let him know when to expect me back, and when I entered the PCO, I found Shaykh Abu Mus'ab along with another brother. When Shaykh Abu Mus'ab saw me, his face lit up (he had a smile which could illuminate a city) and he called out my name and came over and embraced me as if I was the closest brother to him in all of Afghanistan, although in fact I was just one of hundreds of young *muhajireen* there at the time, and I had never actually sat down with him and had a one-on-one conversation with him; rather, our interaction had been limited to the occasional fleeting encounter

and exchange of greetings and pleasantries. I think this sort of character and personality is one of the main things which enabled Shaykh Abu Mus'ab to turn a group of 17 Mujahideen into a formidable fighting force of approximately 20,000 in a mere 2 to 3 years.

The other memory of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi which stands out for me was something which happened about ten days before the decision was made to pull out from Kandahar. I had just come back to Kandahar after about two weeks spent in a mountain pass on the road between Gardez and Khost called Sittakandu, where a large number of the *muhajireen* had gathered after the withdrawal from Kabul. So I had spent about two weeks there sleeping out in the open under some trees, and I was really in need of a bath and a change of clothes. Before I left Kandahar for Kabul, I had left my belongings at what was intended to be our new magazine office (it had recently been built but never actually used). So I went to the office to get some clean clothes and other things I needed. When I got there, I found a meeting in progress or just about to begin, between Ameer-ul-Momineen's secretary and leaders and representatives of the various Arab groups in Kandahar. There were about 7 or 8 people present at this meeting. They included a representative of al-Qa'eda, a representative of the Egyptian Islamic Group, and a representative of the group of Ameer Khattab (the well-known Arab commander in Chechnya—may Allah have mercy on him). Abu Zubaidah was also there, and so was Shaykh Abu Mus'ab, may Allah have mercy on him. I remember that he was dressed all in black: a long black *kurta* and black *shalwar*, and I remember him discussing with Ameer-ul-Momineen's secretary the Emirate's strategy for Kandahar and whether or not a pullout was being planned and how to coordinate any pullout so that that we would have prior warning and a safe and orderly withdrawal could be made as opposed to the sudden and haphazard withdrawals from Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Kabul and other cities.

Now you have to remember that Kandahar was being bombed nonstop by American jets, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and so just holding this meeting was in and of itself a risk, but what complicated matters further was that someone was using a satellite phone at this venue just as the meeting was starting, which was obviously not a wise thing to do. I distinctly remember Ameer-ul-Momineen's secretary coming in, looking down at the phone, looking up at the jets circling in the sky, and then telling the person using the phone "You want our office to get bombed?!"

Anyway, I inquired about my things and was told they had been removed and taken to a house in another part of town. So I went there, got my clothes, and went to a public bath and stayed there for an hour or two (or however long it took to remove the accumulated grit and sweat). Then I went back to Shaykh Abu Hafs al-Mauritani's house, which is where I was staying, and when I got there, I mentioned to the Shaykh that I had been to the office and there had been a meeting under way there, upon which he looked at me with a smile on his face and pointed to the walkie-talkie in his hand and said, "I know. They're saying it's just been bombed"!!!

I was of course shocked, and expecting the worse, but he quickly assured me that no one was killed or even seriously injured, which explained the smile on his face! All of them, including Shaykh Abu Mus'ab, had been sitting inside the office building when two bombs or missiles were dropped on it from the air, which led to the roof of the building caving in on them, but *Subhaanallah*, all of them survived to fight another day, and most of them are still alive today; and al-Zarqawi himself would of course go on to start and lead the Jihad against the American occupation of Iraq. And after Shaykh al-Zarqawi became the bane of the Crusaders and their number one enemy in Iraq, I would always wonder to myself if the Americans knew how close they got to killing him in Afghanistan, and if they did, how they must be kicking themselves for having missed the opportunity that day!

Shaykh Abu Mus'ab, had been sitting inside the office building when two bombs or missiles were dropped on it from the air

﴿وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ﴾

"And when the unbelievers plotted against you to confine you, kill you or expel you; and they plot and Allah plots and Allah is the best of Plotters." (al-Anfaal, Ayat 30)

Resurgence: Everyone is talking today about the mistakes and transgressions of Islamic State. But some people said (and still say) much the same thing about Shaykh Abu Mus'ab: that he made mistakes while leading the Jihad against the Crusaders and their proxies in Iraq.

Adam: Of course he made mistakes, and you and I would make

There's a clear difference between someone for whom mistakes are the exception to the rule —like Shaykh Abu Mus'ab (may Allah have mercy on him)—and someone whose program is based on a series of strategic errors, legal and political blunders, religious and doctrinal deviations and flat-out violations of Shari'ah.

mistakes too if we were leading the Jihadi resistance against one of the fiercest Crusades in history! Everyone makes mistakes, because to err is human! But there's a clear difference between someone for whom mistakes are the exception to the rule —like Shaykh Abu Mus'ab (may Allah have mercy on him)—and someone whose program is based on a series of strategic errors, legal and political blunders, religious and doctrinal deviations and flat-out violations of Shari'ah which are born out of an unwillingness to learn from past experience and a disregard for the opinions of the 'Ulama, advice of the experts and orders and instructions of the experienced, battle-hardened and wise leaders and veterans of Jihad. Regrettably, some of those who claim to be followers and successors of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab fit this description, and through their actions and behavior distort the image and legacy of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab.

Today, there are some who are saying that Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's methodology is responsible for the deviation of the Islamic State group, or is fundamentally no different than its methodology. I beg to differ with this position. Differing with Shaykh Abu Mus'ab on some issues of *fiqh* and policy is one thing, but equating his methodology with that of Islamic State or blaming him for the deviation—several years after his martyrdom—of some people who claim affiliation to him and his *manhaj* is another thing altogether, and I think it's wrong.

Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is a man who, despite being in the midst of a fierce war with the Crusaders and their proxies, respected and fulfilled the *amaan* (safe-conduct) given to three American **soldiers** (not mere aid workers) by a Muslim resident of al-Fallujah, and called on the group holding the Christian aid worker Margaret Hassan to release her unless they had proof she was aligned with the invading coalition, and ordered the houses of even Badr Brigade and Mahdi Army members [i.e. hostile Rafidite Shi'ite combatants] to be emptied of women and children before destroying them, and even exposed and denounced American targeting of journalists and media personnel, including (if my memory serves me right) the Reuters correspondent in Fallujah or al-Ramadi. So how can one possibly compare a man of caution and principled policy like Abu Mus'ab with those who are unable to differentiate between sympathizers and antagonists, nor between neutral and non-neutral elements, nor between unbelievers who can lawfully be killed and those who cannot, nor between Mujahideen and "Awakening Councils", nor between Muslims and *murtadeen* (apostates), and thus seem to have adopted George W. Bush's infamous motto, "You're either with us or with the enemy"?

Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is a man who made it clear that it was his policy only to fight those groups who fought the Muslims and aided the Crusader occupation of Iraq, and that he had no interest in fighting other groups like the Yazidis, Mandaeans and Christians of Iraq. So how can one possibly compare someone like Shaykh Abu Mus'ab, who had his priorities in order, with those who took a break from the defensive Jihad against the main threats to Islam and Muslims in Iraq—namely, the Shi'a sectarian government in Baghdad and the militias, death squad and regional administrations aligned with it—in order to begin a warped and misguided "offensive Jihad" against followers of Iraq's minority religions, thereby giving the Crusader West an excuse—however flimsy—to openly intervene in Iraq and Syria?! But then again, I guess this is merely business as usual for those who—in the name of fighting apostates and rebels and establishing an "Islamic" state—abandoned the defensive Jihad in Syria against the Nusayrites and Rafidites in order to wage all-out war against the same Mujahideen and revolutionaries confronting Bashar al-Asad and his band of thugs!

How can one possibly compare someone like Abu Mus'ab, who was never known to have intentionally spilled the blood of a Muslim or Mujahid nor to have ever participated in fighting and *fitnah* (strife) between Muslims, to those who blatantly refuse to bring such strife to an end—in spite of the repeated calls, pleas and initiatives to end it—and deem permissible

the blood and wealth of Muslims and Mujahideen outside the fold of their organization and worldview and treat them like apostates from Islam, even if they be the closest people to them who only a few days ago were fighting alongside them against the enemies of Islam and Muslims?

How can one possibly compare someone like Abu Mus'ab, who was never known to have rejected or evaded the ruling of a Shari'ah court of arbitration, to those who use every excuse and ruse imaginable to avoid subjecting themselves to the ruling of Shari'ah in their disputes with other Muslims and Mujahideen?

Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is a man who sacrificed his position of leadership by pledging allegiance to the ameer of Qa'eda al-Jihad Group—and by default to the ameer of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan—at a time when Abu Mus'ab was one of the strongest and most influential Mujahideen commanders in the world with no material reason or need to unite with anyone or pledge allegiance to anybody. So how can one possibly compare a selfless champion of unity like Abu Mus'ab to those who broke ranks, violated their solemn pledges of allegiance and obedience, and openly refused to comply with the valid orders of their ameer?

Shaykh Usama bin Ladin—may Allah have mercy on him—said in his speech #22 (his fourth message to the people of Iraq and his first message to them following Shaykh Abu Mus'ab's pledge of allegiance to Shaykh Usama), "For your information, the Mujahid brother Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is the ameer of al-Qa'eda Organization in Mesopotamia, and the brothers there must listen to and obey him amicably. And what a difference there is between **the sincere leaders of the Mujahideen** *(as I reckon them to be and Allah is their Reckoner)* **who give up their leadership positions for the sake of their religion and out of concern for the interest of their Ummah,** *and the kings and presidents of the region's states who, instead of uniting the Ummah and abolishing the borders which the Crusaders drew up, have consolidated differences and divisions in the name of territorial nationalism, and are not only prepared to sacrifice their Ummah and its interests in order to stay in office, but are also prepared to sacrifice their fathers, sons and brothers for the sake of the throne, and the ouster of Hassan bin Talal and Hamza bin al-Hussein [in Jordan] and the marginalization of Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz by the family of Fahd are just some examples of that. So how can these people be expected to unite the Ummah and guard its interests in the midst of the big international blocs? And this is just some of what can be said about them.*

"And then I remind the Mujahideen that uniting the Ummah under the word of Tawheed (Islamic monotheism) is not an optional matter; rather, it is one of the most obligatory of obligations. So it must be given its due, and the Mujahid groups must coordinate among themselves to unite their ranks under one banner. Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, 'Whenever people leave some of what Allah has commanded them to do, animosity and hatred appears among them. And whenever a people separate, they experience ruin and destruction, and whenever they draw together, they experience righteousness and power, for unity is mercy and division is punishment.'"

And Shaykh Usama said in the same message: "It is not hidden that choosing the leaders or presidents is a right of the Ummah."

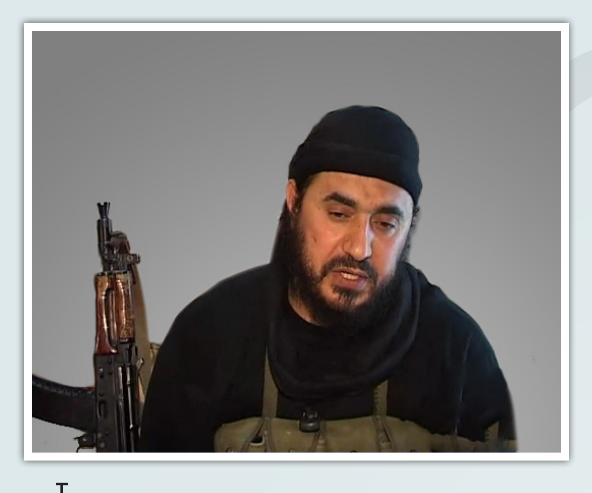
And he also said, "I say to the apostate rulers: the Ummah is the one who owns the right to choose its rulers, so return the trusts to their rightful owners; that is better for you."

I ask our sincere brothers in ISIS to ponder Shaykh Usama's words, in particular his description of the sincere leaders of the Mujahideen. And may Allah guide us all to that which pleases Him.

Frankly, all of us used to be sympathetic to varying degrees towards the Islamic State of Iraq—despite its mistakes—when it was seen as a weak and oppressed force valiantly fighting brutal tyrannies. But now that it has become clear that it has—unfortunately—adopted some of the traits, methods and tactics of those same tyrannies, it no longer holds the same place in our hearts that it did once upon a time.

Whether you agree or disagree with some of the approaches, methods and policies of Shaykh Abu Mus'ab, you have no choice but to admit—if you are fair and honest—that he was innocent of

How can one possibly compare a selfless champion of unity like Shaykh Abu Mus'ab to those who broke ranks, violated their solemn pledges of allegiance and obedience, and openly refused to comply with the valid orders of their ameer?







Shaykh Abu Mus'ab was innocent of the methodology practiced and preached today by the leadership of the Islamic State group

the methodology practiced and preached today by the leadership of the Islamic State group.

Resurgence: But they would counter that it is wrong to compare them to the kings and presidents who consolidate divisions in the Ummah because Islamic State is one of the biggest enemies of territorial nationalism and the first to abolish the artificial Sykes-Picot border between Iraq and Syria; and moreover, how can you accuse them of consolidating differences and division when it is well known that they continue to advocate unity among the Mujahideen by calling on them to pledge allegiance to the ameer of Islamic State?

Adam: The abolishment of the border between Syria and Iraq is little more than a fig leaf; even if we accept that they have demolished this one barrier, the moral and material divisions and obstacles to Islamic unity which the "Islamic State" faction is guilty of creating and consolidating are much greater in number. These include: excommunicating and spilling the blood of Muslims without right, displaying fanatical partisanship to group and ameer, engaging in the tribal-factional warfare of the Jahiliyyat or pre-Islamic time of ignorance ("help your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed"), considering itself to be the only legitimate group and its *manhaj* the only legitimate *manhaj*, breaking oaths of allegiance and obedience without any *shar'i* justification, forcing its rule upon the Ummah, and numerous other manifestations of division and disunity.

As for the call of this group's leadership for unity among Mujahideen, it carries only one possible meaning: that the other groups abandon their own banners and unite under the banner of the "Islamic State", and if they don't, then they are Kharijites and rebels at best and infidels and apostates at worst. Obviously, this is not the consensual, mutually-agreed unity between Mujahideen that Shaykh Usama was talking about; this is the "unity" of tyrants with no tolerance for dissent or opposition, and their use of Islamic terms and slogans doesn't change the reality on the ground or hide the facts.

Resurgence: Is al-Qa'eda's dispute with the Islamic State group merely about issues of policy and strategy as some people claim, or is it about methodology and religion as well?

Adam: At first (i.e. a few years ago) we thought it was primarily about relatively minor points of policy, strategy, priorities and interpretation of Islamic law, but this assessment has changed over time as more and more facts have come to light; and over the past year and a half it has become clear to us and anyone who knows al-Qa'eda's methodology—which is no different than the methodology of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah as understood and explained by the righteous 'Ulama—that the distance between us and the Islamic State group is greater than we had imagined, and that our differences may even extend to matters of 'Aqeedah. So I'm afraid that those who insist on lumping al-Qa'eda together with the Islamic State group and calling us and them "brothers in methodology" are badly mistaken.

Resurgence: What is your response to those who say that the leaders of al-Qa'eda changed their opinion about the Islamic State group, accused it of deviation and broke ties with it solely on the basis of the mass media's portrayal of it and the testimony of those they claim were its rivals and adversaries—which, if true, would make their testimony

Those who insist on lumping al-Qa'eda together with the Islamic State group and calling us and them "brothers in methodology" are badly mistaken.

dubious and unacceptable—like Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Golani and the martyr—as we reckon him to be— Shaykh Abu Khalid al-Suri (may Allah have mercy on him)?

Adam: That's not true. From what I know of the evaluation process which led to our leaders formulating their current stance towards the Islamic State group and taking the unanimous decision to expel it from al-Qa'eda, it was primarily based on the following factors:

-Numerous reports from reliable sources—including some sent to Syria especially for the purpose of evaluating the situation on the ground—which confirmed the accuracy of many of the accusations leveled against Islamic State and that their reputation for extremism, unjustifiable and unacceptable *Takfeer* and commission of murder and senseless violence and brutality against Muslims is not without cause.

-The official media of the IS group and the communiqués of its leaders and spokesmen, which showed—among other things—that they believe themselves to be the only group on the truth and that they alone are "the victorious party" *(al-Taa'ifatul-Mansoorah)* and everyone else are either deviants, apostates or agents of the enemies, regardless of their weak and self-contradictory attempts to deny that this is the way they see things.

-The open refusal of Islamic State's leadership to bring an end to the strife which broke out in Syria and agree to arbitration in a Shari'ah court, using baseless arguments and pretexts some of which bring to mind the arguments of the *Harooriyya* (the first Kharijites), such as their claim that arbitrating in an independent Shari'ah court is a *bid'ah* (innovation) contrary to the Qur'an!!! Not to mention the other evasive maneuvers they are guilty of; and you can read about the details in Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's communiqué on the subject dated 27 Rajab 1435 and published on May 26th, 2014.

-Internal correspondence with leaders of the Islamic State group in which they demonstrated (among other things) their unwillingness to admit (much less rectify) their mistakes.

-The open refusal of Islamic State's leadership to obey AQ central command's direct orders to cancel the new "state" they had announced—without consulting the representatives of Muslims in Syria—and return to Iraq.

-The Islamic State group's repeated violations of AQ's general policies, such as those contained in Shaykh Ayman's *General Guidelines for Jihadi Work*.

And a more recent development which has affected our view of this group is its declaration (following the break with al-Qa'eda) of a "caliphate" and appointment of a "caliph" without the legal requirements and preconditions and (once again) without consultation with the Ummah.

As for the claim that al-Qa'eda's leaders blindly accepted the accusations and allegations of Islamic State's enemies or the mass media or other biased parties and individuals, it is a claim which has no basis in reality, and anyway, I think it has now become clear that from Islamic State's perspective and according to its warped way of looking at things, anyone who denounces its actions or rejects its policies or differs with it in any way becomes its "enemy" and thus his testimony against it becomes unacceptable! Which obviously is not what the 'Ulama mean when they talk about the inadmissibility of an enemy's testimony against his enemy (*shahaadatul-'aduwwi 'alaa 'aduwwihi*), not to mention the fact that they are talking primarily about the admissibility of such testimony in judicial proceedings and not necessarily in other situations.

Resurgence: But as I'm sure you're aware, the "caliphate" people not only claim to be successors to Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, they also portray themselves as the only true upholders of the *manhaj* of Shaykh Usama and the other martyred leaders of al-Qa'eda like Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Leebi and Shaykh 'Attiyatullah al-Leebi. How do you respond to this claim?

Adam: I think that anyone who knows these noble Shaykhs knows full well that their *manhaj* was poles apart from the *manhaj* of these people. I've already pointed out some of the differences, but let me mention a few more for posterity:

Shaykh Usama is a man who packed his bags and left Afghanistan when the infighting between the Jihadi groups began following the fall of the communist regime

Shaykh Usama is a man who hated the spilling of Muslim blood. How can his manhaj be the same as the manhaj which labels entire groups of Mujahideen as apostates whose blood can be lawfully spilled?



An exclusive picture of Shaykh Osama with Shaykh Abu Hafs at Tora Bora

after his attempts to mediate a ceasefire and bring an end to the strife failed, so how can his *manhaj* be the same *manhaj* which caused a bloody strife in Syria and then perpetuated it by refusing to come to the negotiating table or abide by the rules of a Shari'ah court?

Shaykh Usama is a man who hated the spilling of Muslim blood, and is even known to have on more than one occasion forgiven and released **spies** who had been sent by the enemies of Islam to gather information on him and perhaps try to assassinate him, so how can his *manhaj* be the same as the *manhaj* which excommunicates and murders Muslims and Mujahideen who refuse to join a particular group or dare to leave it or stand up to its tyranny? How can his *manhaj* be the same as the *manhaj* which labels entire groups of Mujahideen as apostates whose blood can be lawfully spilled and which has declared open war on entire Muslim peoples and tribes (as has occurred most recently in Dayr-az-Zawr, al-Anbar and elsewhere), leaving a trail of hundreds of headless, bloodied and mutilated Muslim corpses in its wake?

Shaykh Usama is a man who, in order to avoid conflict and discord, advised his men to refrain from arguing and haggling with local shop owners when buying goods, and even forbade the emigrant Mujahideen under his command to take part in the execution or killing of certain **apostates** in order to avoid inflaming the sensitivities of the Muslim tribes to which they belong, so how can his *manhaj* be the same as a *manhaj* which insists on appointing the *muhajireen* from beyond the borders as policemen, judges and governors with all that entails in terms of friction with the locals?

Shaykh Usama is a man who, for the same reason, ordered his men to pray in the local *masjids* and abandon any way of praying which might create problems with the Hanafi laity in Afghanistan, many of whom don't know anything about the other Fiqhi Madhhabs, and also advised his men to focus on Jihad and Da'wah and not be rash or hasty in performing any form of *Hisbah* (commanding of good and forbidding of evil) which might have more negative consequences for our Jihad than positive ones , especially when it is known or feared that such actions will lead to a greater evil, like (for example) transforming the Jihad from a war between Muslims and unbelievers to a war between Muslims and Muslims; so how can his *manhaj* be the same as a *manhaj* which wants to impose immediately and virtually overnight certain laws and positions which, regardless of their validity or otherwise,

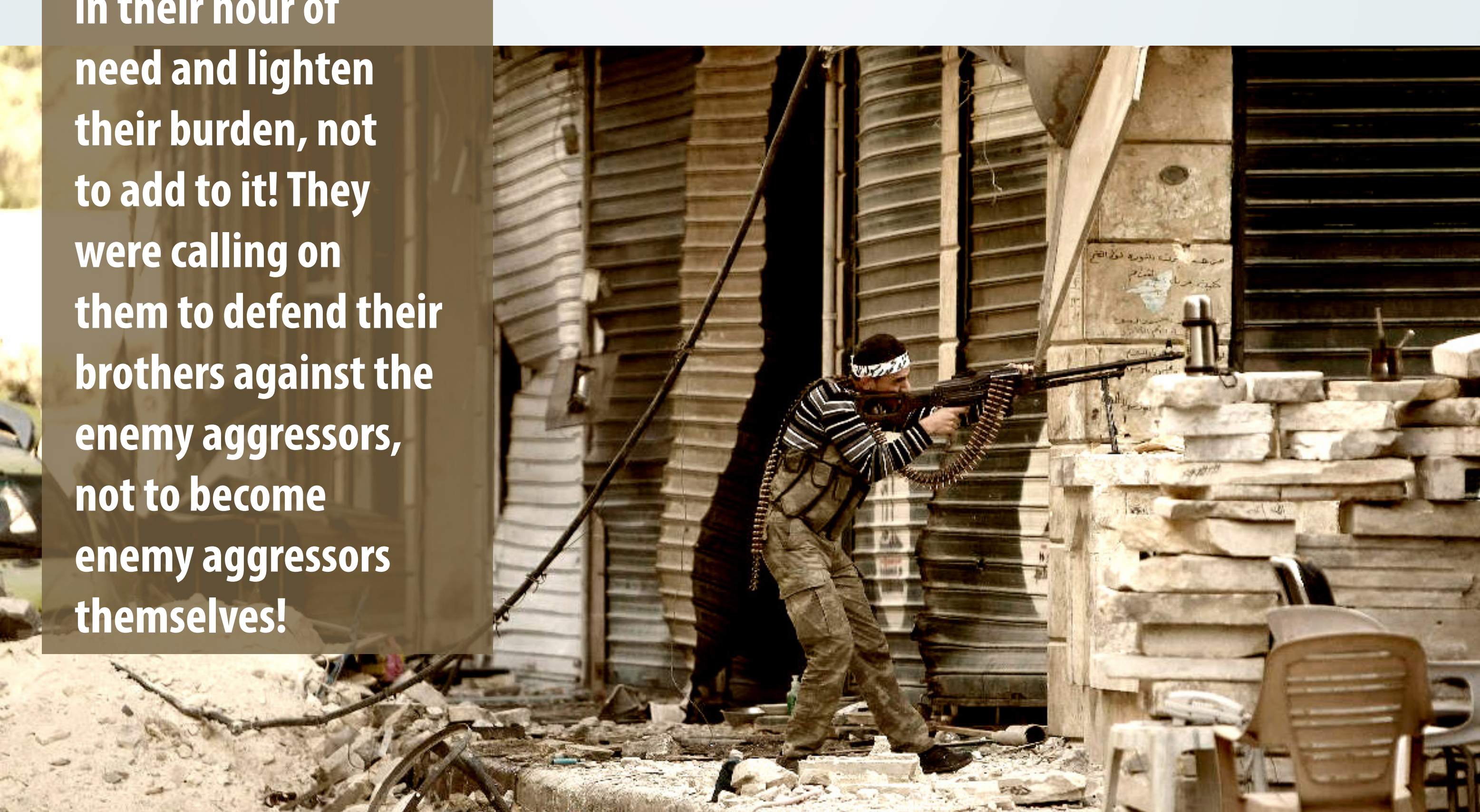
are alien to peoples who, thanks to the apostate rulers and their backers among the Kuffaar, have been forcibly estranged from even agreed-upon Islamic principles and laws (to say nothing of the sensitive and controversial matters which some of us insist on implementing whatever the cost to the Ummah's Jihad) for upwards of a century, and thus need to be educated about these things and acclimated to them gradually and with wisdom.

I could go on and on...but honestly, does anyone in his right mind think that when our Shaykhs like Shaykh Usama, Shaykh 'Atiyyah and Shaykh Abu Yahya called on Muslims and Mujahideen to emigrate or mobilize to Iraq and Syria for Jihad, they were calling on them to declare a "state" and wage war on everyone who refused to accept or join it?! Does anyone think they were calling on them to do to the Muslims of Iraq and Syria what the so-called Islamic State has done?! Does anyone think they were calling on them to bring the wrath of the entire world down on Iraq and Syria by attacking and displacing largely powerless and defenseless minorities and slaughtering their men and enslaving their women and children? Does anyone think they were calling on them to give the Kurdish nationalists an excuse to declare their independent state? Of course not! Rather, our Shaykhs were calling on Muslims and Mujahideen to go to help their Iraqi and Syrian brothers in their hour of need and lighten their burden, not to add to it! They were calling on them to defend their brothers against the enemy aggressors, not to become enemy aggressors themselves! They were calling on them to work with their brothers for the establishment of the authentic Islamic form of government which is based on knowledge, Taqwa (fear of Allah), transparency, justice, accountability and mutual consultation and agreement; so is this the form of government the Islamic State group has given the Muslims and Mujahideen of Syria and Iraq?

As for our Shaykhs' open support of the Islamic State of Iraq once upon a time, their support for it was—without going into too much detail—a position more or less dictated by circumstance and/or necessity (such as the need to focus on the fight against the occupation in Iraq). The decision to back them was also influenced by the confidence our leaders had in the person of Shaykh Abu Hamza al-Muhajir—may Allah have mercy on him—who many of them knew well (and whom I myself met in Afghanistan, by the way) and whom they knew wouldn't accept or condone the crimes, transgressions and excesses which were being attributed to the ISI.

So these are some of the factors which led them to initially support ISI and continue to support it until its deviant nature was eventually confirmed after it declared its new state in Syria; and to claim otherwise or imply that their support for ISI means they agreed with everything it was doing is simply preposterous.

Our Shaykhs were calling on Muslims and Mujahideen to go to help their Iraqi and Syrian brothers in their hour of need and lighten their burden, not to add to it! They were calling on them to defend their brothers against the enemy aggressors, not to become enemy aggressors themselves!



As long as acknowledgement of reality has no role to play in decision-making and empty zeal and excessive optimism are the guiding forces in play, why stop at empty declarations of states and caliphates? Why not declare—for example—the "liberation" of Palestine today? Or celebrate the "recovery" of Muslim Spain the day after tomorrow?!

Resurgence: So al-Qa'eda's rejection of the declaration of the "caliphate" isn't only because of the nature of those behind the declaration and their disregarding the orders of al-Qa'eda's general command; rather, there are other reasons as well for rejecting it?

Adam: Yes! Declaring a "caliphate" and appointing a "caliph" in this manner—prematurely, hastily, without the legal requirements and preconditions, and without consultation with the Ummah—is in and of itself a deviation, regardless of the identity and nature of those behind it.

We cannot bypass Allah's universal traditions. If establishing the Islamic system and restoring the Caliphate was as simple as a group, party or state making a unilateral declaration, the Ummah wouldn't have gone more than 90 years without a political entity to unify, represent and defend it. But apparently, the people who made this declaration have managed to deceive themselves into believing that they have discovered something that generations of Mujahideen and workers for Islam have missed: i.e., that the answer to all our problems is to appoint a "caliph" regardless of the situation on the ground and the authority—or lack thereof—wielded by this "caliph."

As long as acknowledgement of reality has no role to play in decision-making and empty zeal and excessive optimism are the guiding forces in play, why stop at empty declarations of states and caliphates? Why not declare—for example—the "liberation" of Palestine today? Or celebrate the "recovery" of Muslim Spain the day after tomorrow?!

The important thing I want all our brothers and sisters to remember is that if this "caliphate" is defeated or destroyed or reaches a dead end, or if they see this "caliphate" do things which no Muslim can support or condone, it in no way means a failure or setback for the noble and legitimate goal of restoring the Caliphate, because simply put, this self-appointed "caliphate" is not the Caliphate for which generations of Mujahideen and martyrs have been working. This "caliphate" is the project of a marginal group which has already distorted the image of Jihad and is now distorting the image of the Caliphate.

Resurgence: But what if it does succeed in its stated goal of toppling the regimes, demolishing the borders and establishing (and maintaining) a region-wide state?

Adam: That's a bridge we'll cross when we come to it.

Resurgence: Some people are asking why doesn't Ameer-ul-Momineen Mulla Muhammad Umar Mujahid—may Allah preserve him—pledge allegiance to the "caliphate" now that it has been declared?

Adam: Actually, this question should be rephrased as follows: why *should* Ameer-ul-Momineen pledge allegiance to the "caliphate"?! Especially since this same "caliphate" was for almost ten years under the leadership of Ameer-ul-Momineen by virtue of its being the Iraqi branch of al-Qa'eda. And don't believe the futile attempts of Islamic State to deny this or muddy the waters: that there was a pledge of allegiance from Islamic State to al-Qa'eda is a proven fact and something of which I myself was aware of from 2007 at least.

Resurgence: When you criticize the "caliphate" or talk about "a marginal group which has distorted the image of Jihad, etc." are you talking about everyone who belongs to this group or about certain individuals or factions within it, such as the leadership for example?

Adam: I'm talking about all who fit the description of those I have criticized, whether they be leaders or followers. I'm **not** talking about those who have only joined the group under duress; nor am I talking about those sincere Mujahideen who have only joined the group to fight the enemies of Allah and discharge the individual duty of Jihad and have nothing to do with the sins and deviations of the senior leadership and those who

blindly follow it in disobedience to Allah. Although I don't necessarily condone their remaining in such a group—assuming they're able to leave it, that is—at the same time I cannot in good conscience compare them to those whom I've been talking about today.

That being said, there's an important point I'd like to make here regarding the issue of whether it is right to remain in a group like this, which is that many groups, parties and organizations have in their ranks corrupt, undisciplined and even deviant elements to one extent or another, because practically speaking, it's almost impossible to totally weed out such elements without compromising the viability and integrity of the group; but as long as the problem is confined to a limited number of individuals or low-to-mid-ranking units, it can usually be dealt with through a system of checks and balances, and the rest of the group won't be affected by the behavior of the minority. However, when the problem becomes pervasive to the extent that it reaches the highest echelons of the group and its leadership is taken over by such elements, then the entire group is almost always affected, because as a rule, the leadership's decisions are implemented on the entire group and are not easily avoided. So when the leadership turns bad, the group turns bad even if there are many good people within it, and in such a case, the only real hope for reform is in purging the leadership of the corrupt elements; and if that is not feasible, then the only other option—lest one share in the sin—is to leave the group, unless, of course, you happen to be part of an autonomous faction or unit whose affiliation with the group is superficial and in name only (for recruitment and funding purposes, for example). And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: But what about the principle of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah which calls for performing Jihad with every Muslim ameer or army, whether righteous or otherwise? Doesn't this principle apply here?

Adam: It may apply to some people in some areas, but one really can't make a blanket judgement, because the principle you mentioned is not absolute or unqualified. Rather, as I understand it, it has several qualifiers or conditions which must be met in order for the principle to be applicable.

Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah—may Allah have mercy on him—says in his famous *fatwa* concerning fighting the Ilkhanid Mongols led by Mahmud Ghazan:

"Thus, one of the fundamentals of the people of the Sunnah and Jama'at is performing Jihad with every righteous and unrighteous person, because—as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) informed us—Allah aids this religion with the immoral person and with people who have no share of goodness, and because when the Jihad only comes to pass with immoral ameers or with an army full of immorality, there are only two options in front of us: either abandoning Jihad with them, which means that others will take over who are more harmful to the Deen (religion) and worldly life, or performing Jihad with the immoral ameer, thereby repelling those who are more immoral and establishing most of the laws of Islam, even if it is not possible to establish all of them. This is what is obligatory in this scenario and in every similar scenario. Indeed, most of the Jihad which occurred after the rightly-guided Caliphs only took place in this way. […]

"So if one becomes acquainted with what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon) ordered in terms of the Jihad which the ameers will continue to carry out until the Day of Judgement, and what he forbade in terms of helping the wrongdoers in their wrongdoing, one will know that the middle path which is the pure and unadulterated Deen of Islam is <u>performing Jihad against those who deserve to have Jihad waged against them</u>—like these people who are the subject of the question [i.e. the Mongols]—<u>with every ameer and party which is nearer to Islam than them if it is not possible to wage Jihad against them except in that way, while avoiding helping the party which he [i.e. the Mujahid] fights alongside in any form of disobedience to Allah;</u> rather, he must obey them in obedience to Allah and not obey them in disobedience to Allah, because there is no obedience to a created being in disobedience to the Creator. And this is the way of the best of this Ummah yesterday and today, and it is obligatory on every mukallaf [Muslim who has reached the age of responsibility]. And it is midway between the path of the Harooriyya and their ilk, who take the path of misguided caution and piety born out of a lack of knowledge, and the path of the Murji'ites and their ilk, who take the path of total obedience to the ameers in everything even if they [i.e. the ameers] are not righteous." (Majmoo'atul-Fataawa)

So from this text, we come to the conclusion that this principle of the people of the Sunnah and Jama'ah (performing Jihad with every ameer or army, righteous or unrighteous) has a number of qualifiers, foremost among them:

-That performing Jihad and achieving its objectives are only possible with this unrighteous ameer or army, or to put it another way: if it is possible to perform Jihad and achieve its objectives with another ameer or army which is more righteous or closer to the truth, then there is no Islamic

> As for those who come from outside Iraq and Syria in order to join the Islamic State group and bolster and swell its ranks, I think we can safely say that there is no Islamic justification for what they are doing, since they have the ability to join a number of other groups which are closer to the truth.

reason to fight with the corrupt or oppressive ameer or army.

-That the enemies one fights with this army are further from the truth than the corrupt army itself. If, on the other hand, those whom the corrupt army are fighting are no different from it in terms of righteousness or adherence to the truth, then there is—generally speaking—no legal justification for fighting in the ranks of the corrupt army, even if it raises the banner of Islam.

-That the one who performs Jihad with this oppressive or corrupt ameer or army does not share in their sins, oppression and wrong-doing, and that he discharges his duty of commanding good and virtue and forbidding evil and vice, and that he has the knowledge necessary to discharge this duty and avoids falling into the sins committed by this army or spilling innocent blood or taking unlawful wealth or violating inviolable honor.

So on this basis, we can say that it might be legitimate for *some* Muslims in *some* of the localities which this group dominates or controls to fight alongside it in order to defend Muslims from the threat posed by enemies of Islam like the Raafidi Shi'ites or the Americans and their apostate agents, but on the condition that fighting alongside it doesn't require them to spill the blood of other Muslims or Mujahideen or take their wealth or wrong them in any way, whether in the name of fighting apostates and "Awakening Councils" or in the name of establishing or defending the state.

As for those who come from outside Iraq and Syria in order to join the Islamic State group and bolster and swell its ranks, I think we can safely say that there is no Islamic justification for what they are doing, since they have the ability to join a number of other groups which are closer to the truth than this group and much more likely to achieve the objectives of Jihad. And in this context, I call on all sincere groups of Mujahideen in Iraq and Syria to make it as easy as possible for the Mujahid youth from abroad to join their groups, in order to save them from an uncertain fate in the ranks of the "caliphate". And Allah knows best.

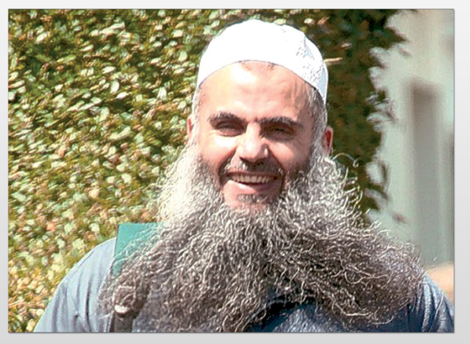
Resurgence: Some people say that the current American, Western and apostate focus on the threat of the "caliphate" and the coalition the enemies have formed against it shows that it is on the right path!

Adam: Then Lebanese Hezbollah, the Iranian and Syrian regimes and Saddam Hussein and his Ba'athists are or were on the right path as well, because all of them have been focuses of American and Western coalitions at one time or another!

Similarly, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria, which everyone now agrees deviated from the religion and became a corrupt and murderous *Takfeeri* group in the mid 1990s, was also on the right path as well, because Western and Arab security services and intelligence agencies kept it on the list of banned terrorist organizations even after its deviation and continued to target its members and supporters wherever it found them and break up their cells until its notorious and bloody ameer Antar Zouabri was hunted down and killed by Algerian police in February 2002. This despite the fact that at the same time the West and its Arab proxies were cracking down on the GIA, it was also at war with the sincere Mujahideen who would later form the nucleus of Qa'eda al-Jihad in the Islamic Maghreb.

The fact is, the present American-led coalition is more a Crusade against

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Shaykh Abu Qatada


Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi

the Muslims and Mujahideen of Iraq and Syria and their uprisings against Western-backed tyrannies than it is a Crusade against the Islamic State group. But even if we accept that the Crusader coalition's real target is the Islamic State group, that doesn't exonerate it or prove that it's on the right path, because America and the West target whoever they believe poses a threat to their interests, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, right or wrong, Mujahideen or mafias; and not only that, they sometimes exaggerate the threat posed by some groups in order to achieve certain objectives (like using the alleged threat to influence domestic opinion and justify military interventions which could not otherwise be justified); and that is why judging people and groups solely on the basis of the extent of hostility and antagonism our enemies demonstrate towards them is a mistake; in fact, as far as I can tell, it is a contemporary *bid'ah* (innovation) which has no basis in the Quran, Sunnah or words of the scholars; and those who use it as a standard or measure will eventually face a host of unanswerable questions and inevitable conclusions which they will have great difficulty answering or explaining away.

The only acceptable standard for differentiating between right and wrong and determining who is on the truth and who is not is knowledge of Shari'ah, and it is only when this knowledge is weak, lacking or absent that people resort to these made-up criterions and benchmarks. And when it comes to evaluating and judging the would-be "caliphate" and those who lead it, it suffices us that—as far as I know—no respected and acknowledged senior *'aalim* (man of knowledge) on earth has demonstrated sympathy for the stances and policies we criticize them for, and that the only people who have come to the defense of the caliphate's leadership and stood by it—following the appearance and confirmation of its deviation and in spite of the gravity of its sins and errors—are low-ranking and junior students of knowledge and/or anonymous "Shaykhs" whom we only know about from their writings on the Internet.

Resurgence: Does it follow from al-Qa'eda's criticism of Islamic State and its dispute with it that al-Qa'eda is happy to see the current wave of sustained attacks against it by America and its international allies and regional proxies? Or to put it another way: If al-Qa'eda's Syrian branch and other groups of Mujahideen hadn't been targeted along with the Islamic State group, would al-Qa'eda have taken a different view of the new Crusade in Syria and Iraq?

Adam: Of course not! Al-Qa'eda opposed American and Western aggression against Iraq when it was ruled by the apostate tyrant (and Western proxy) Saddam Hussein, and Shaykh Usama considered support of this aggression—even if only with words—to be a nullifier of Islam, in accordance with the Ijmaa' (consensus) of the 'Ulama which says that supporting Kuffaar against Muslims takes one outside the fold of Islam; similarly, we opposed the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in 2006 even though its primary target was areas under the control of Lebanese Hezbollah; and Shaykh Ayman's message in this regard is well known. So does anyone in his right mind think that al-Qa'eda would under any circumstance support American and Western aggression against Iraq and Syria today, **when the proclaimed targets are people we still consider to be our brothers in Islam**, regardless of how they may view or treat us? Does anyone in his right mind think that al-Qa'eda would under any circumstance support the unbelievers' indiscriminate bombing of Muslim men, women and children, many of who have nothing to do with 'Islamic State' in the first place? **There's no way we could support such aggression,** especially since it is apparent that combating the 'Islamic State' group is just a convenient pretext which the enemies are exploiting and exaggerating to serve their own interests and divert attention from their humiliating pullout from

Afghanistan and Iraq, and that the ultimate objective of these strikes and the accompanying ground operations is to reestablish Crusader control of the region by suppressing the Sunni tribes and Mujahideen of Iraq, hijacking and/or derailing the popular uprising in Syria, rescuing and rehabilitating the Western-backed puppet regimes in Damascus, Baghdad and Irbil, and dividing Iraq and Syria along ethnic and sectarian lines, as part of the new Middle East which the Crusader West has decided should replace Sykes-Picot; and it seems to me that in much the same way these enemies of Islam used the Sharif Hussein and his Arab nationalist "caliphate" and Abdul Azeez bin Sa'ud and his "pure Islamic creed and methodology" to divide the region yesterday, they today may well be using the leadership of the Islamic State group and the "caliphate" it has declared to further divide the already-divided, whether those behind the "caliphate" know it or not!

Resurgence: But the West claims it is carrying out a humanitarian intervention against the "Islamic State" because of its crimes against humanity and oppression of minorities.

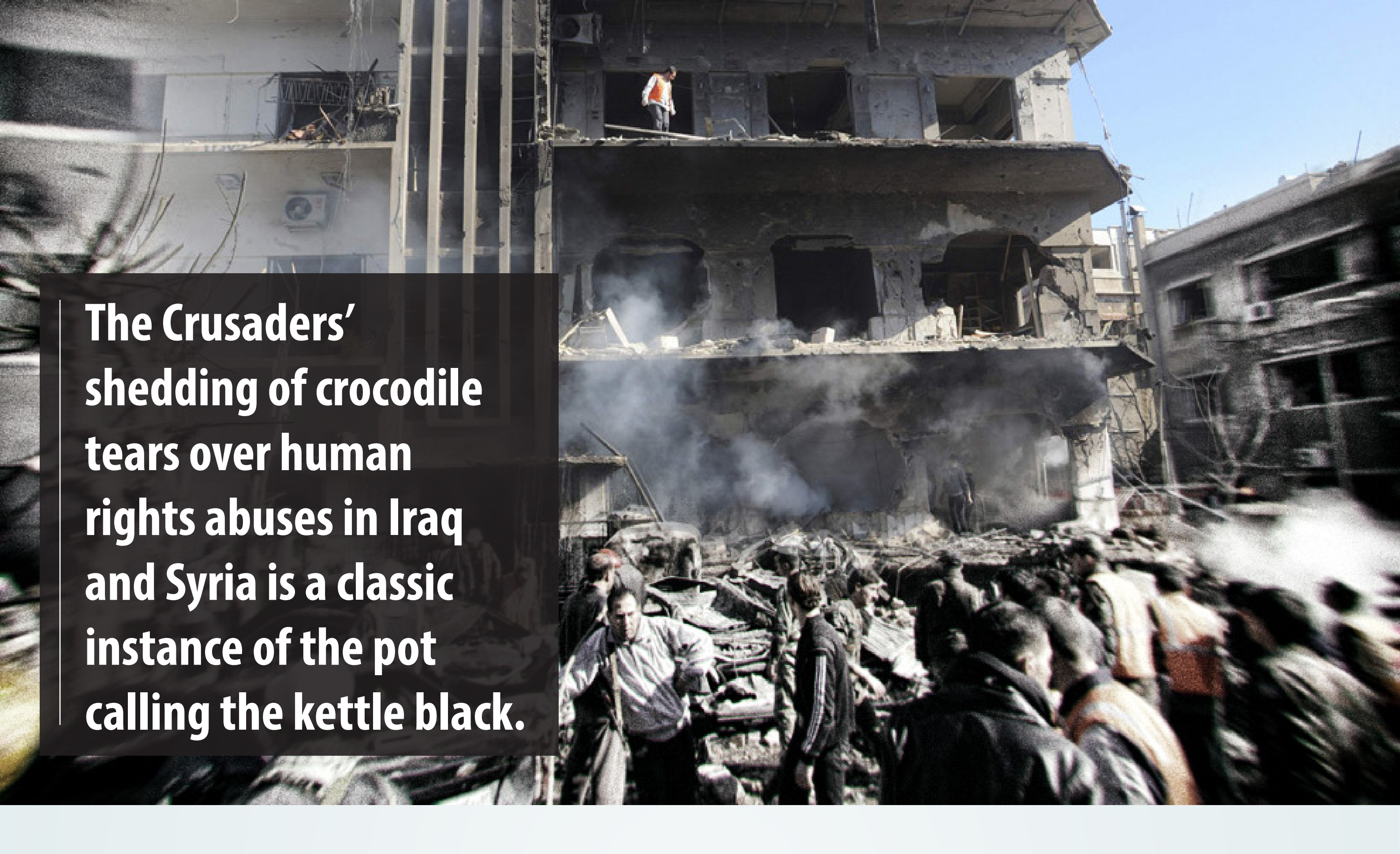
Adam: This is mere Western hypocrisy, pure and simple. Let me be clear: I don't condone any crimes which may have been committed by the self-proclaimed "caliphate", but the fact is, these crimes pale in insignificance next to the crimes of—for example—Bashar al-Asad in Syria and Benjamin Netanyahu in Palestine. Where was the West's supposed humanitarianism and compassion while Gaza languished under a brutal and oppressive blockade for more than 6 years? And where was the West's supposed humanitarianism and compassion while the Jewish Aggression Forces were slaughtering over 2000 Palestinians—more than a quarter of them children—for several weeks last summer? Weren't America and her allies the ones who gave the Jews the green light to carry out the aggression? And isn't Martin Dempsey (chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff) the one who recently made the ridiculous claim that Israel took extraordinary measures to avoid civilian casualties during that campaign of terror?

Where was the West's supposed humanitarianism and compassion towards the more than 200,000 Syrians bombed, gassed, butchered and starved to death over the last three and a half years by the Alawites and their allies? And why, instead of intervening on behalf of the Syrian people, is the West now openly talking about coordinating with the bloody and brutal regime in Damascus—and its similarly bloody and brutal Iranian backer—to combat the threat of Islamic State?! Where is the humanitarianism in that?!

The Crusaders' shedding of crocodile tears over human rights abuses in Iraq and Syria is a classic instance of the pot calling the kettle black. Does America and the West think we have forgotten the historic crimes they committed against the Iraqi people during more than 30 years of interference, bombing, embargoes and occupation, in which millions were killed, crippled, displaced and imprisoned as a direct result of oppressive and unjust Western policies? Where was the West's supposed humanitarianism then? Where was its righteous anger and principled response when its agent Saddam massacred thousands of Sunni Muslim Kurds in Halabja with the chemical weapons it supplied to him?! Where was its compassion for the millions of Iraqi children (including minorities) who suffered illness, malnutrition and starvation under Western and American-sponsored international sanctions? Where is its shame for

Combating the 'Islamic State' group is just a convenient pretext which the enemies are exploiting and exaggerating to serve their own interests and divert attention from their humiliating pullout from Afghanistan and Iraq.





what it has done (and continues to do)?

The Crusader West—led by America, Britain, France and the United Nations—is fooling no one except those who allow themselves to be fooled. Today more than ever before, the Muslim Ummah knows that the Crusader West is a devil in wolf's clothing, and all its slogans about concern for human rights are emptier than America and Britain's war chests. And in this context, we have to highlight and commend the wise and principled position taken by the Mujahideen, revolutionaries and Sunni clans in Syria and Iraq who—despite their well-known stance towards the Islamic State group—have proclaimed their rejection of the policies of America and her Crusader and regional allies and have emphasized their refusal to cooperate with the coalition in this aggression or help it achieve its objectives, and we ask Allah to reward them for this stance and grant them steadfastness and perseverance in it, because it is clear that the only way this toothless international aggression will succeed is if it is able to incite Sunni to fight Sunni and pit us against each other instead of our enemies, something which would save the Syrian and Iraqi regimes from collapse and defeat and allow the Zionists and Crusaders and their agents on both sides of the Gulf to take control of the region once more.

Resurgence: You earlier alluded to the GIA, a name which repeatedly pops up in discussions of the deviation of the self-proclaimed "caliphate" as well as the *Takfeeri* methodology, to which you also alluded. What more can you tell us about the GIA?

Adam: When the Jihad against the French and American-backed secular nationalist military junta in Algeria got under way following the cancellation of the elections which the Islamists of the Salvation Front were poised to win, the Armed Islamic Group (also known as the GIA, which is the acronym of its name in French, Groupe Islamique Arme) quickly became one of the most prominent of the groups fighting the regime. I have heard from brothers who were around during the Jihad in Algeria that the period between 1992 to 1995 was a "golden age of Jihad," and the GIA was given much of the credit for this success; and after many of the smaller groups united with it, its strength increased even more and it seemed that the regime was on the verge of losing the battle.

But regrettably, a leadership change in or around 1995 led to the appearance of a dangerous deviation and fatal flaw in the methodology of this group, a deviation which manifested itself first in a bloody internal purge of Mujahideen who had disagreements with the leadership or were suspected of having disagreements with it. It is said that someone could be imprisoned or even killed for reasons as trivial as someone having seen him once without a turban, or with his trouser legs not rolled up above the ankles! Hundreds—if not thousands—of Mujahideen were liquidated in

this way. Meanwhile, the group began to expand its list of targets to include people with no connection whatsoever to the war against Islam and Muslims. This eventually led to a series of bloody massacres against innocent and defenseless Algerian civilians—men, women and children—who were shot, knifed and hacked to death in their homes or at fake checkpoints as the apostate security forces stood idly by in the safety of their nearby bases and barracks (which of course were no longer the main targets of the GIA, which was now focused on fighting the "apostate" Algerian people).

Eventually, the criminality and oppression of the GIA led the groups and individuals opposed to the new direction taken by the GIA to unite against it, mainly under the banner of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which later became Qa'eda al-Jihad in the Islamic Maghreb. They were forced to fight the GIA for several years, three of which were dedicated to fighting the GIA alone: i.e. such was the threat posed by the GIA that those fighting it didn't carry out any offensive operations against the apostate regime and its agents for three whole years.

When I first joined the Mujahideen, the GIA was still an active force, the horrible massacres for which it became notorious were still being committed on a regular basis, and people were still in shock and trying to make sense of what had happened. The deviant GIA eventually became extinct, but its memory lives on as a stark warning of the dangers that religious ignorance, extremism and fanaticism pose to Jihad and the Mujahideen. The deviation of the GIA was not only a major blow to the Jihad in Algeria, it was also a huge shock for the Jihad movement as a whole, and that is why the leaders, scholars and thinkers of the Mujahideen continue to study the Algerian experience and talk about it, lest it be repeated elsewhere if it be forgotten.

As for the comparisons which are often drawn between the GIA and Islamic State, one cannot deny that there are striking similarities between the two groups. However, while the negative effects of the deviation of the GIA were largely limited to Algeria (despite their reverberations being felt throughout the wider Jihad movement), the negative effects of the deviation of Islamic State have the potential to be regional and even global, thanks to the deceptive propaganda campaign it is waging using new media, a campaign which targets Muslims and Mujahideen everywhere and aims to bring them over to the side of Islamic State.

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As far as I know, the deviant GIA never indicated a desire to expand outside Algeria, spread its ideas to neighboring countries or co-opt groups in other arenas of Jihad; on the contrary, it seemed to harbor suspicion or dislike for the non-Algerian Mujahideen and ended up expelling, killing and executing a number of them. This is in contrast to the deviant "Islamic State," which actively recruits those who arrive from outside its theater of operations, and has ambitions of making as many countries as possible "provinces" of its imaginary "caliphate". This is why I believe that remaining silent towards the self-styled "Islamic State" or bowing in the face of pressure and intimidation is not an option. Rather, warning the Ummah about this group and exposing its deviant methodology is the duty of every capable Muslim, and any further hesitation or negligence in discharging this duty could have devastating consequences for the Jihad of the Muslim Ummah.

Resurgence: But despite their deviant methodology and the hideous crimes of some of them, they are still Muslims after all is said and done. So is it right for us to focus on the flaws of a Muslim group at a time when it is being targeted by the enemies the way Islamic State is being targeted?

Adam: I would reply to this with three points:

First, the Muslim Ummah in general and the Jihad movement in particular is engaged in a relentless and unceasing battle with the enemies of Islam and Muslims, and all the indications are that this battle is not got going to end soon. The Americans themselves have said that their Crusade against Islamic State will take years, not months, giving the Islamic State group plenty of opportunity to market itself and spread its tentacles throughout the Islamic world. So if we don't expose this group's deviation now, then when? Are we supposed to expose its true face *after* it has taken control of the Jihad movement and derailed it? Are we supposed to start talking about it after it has destroyed everything the Ummah has worked so hard to build over the past century?

Second, we in al-Qaeda—at least—have been consistent in exposing

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other Islamic groups' deviation from the proper methodology and their crimes against Muslims even as they were being subjected to hostile campaigns by the enemies of Islam and Muslims; see, for example, our critiques of the leadership of HAMAS in Palestine and—more recently—the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. So why is it that when we criticize the Islamic State group's obvious crimes and deviations, some people accuse us of changing our approach in this regard?

And third, the Islamic State group itself has no right to complain if we criticize it in its time of difficulty and hardship, because isn't its own spokesman the one who claimed the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists were "worse and eviler than the secularists themselves" at the same time as they were being massacred by those same secularists in the streets of Egypt?! And did Islamic State turn a blind eye to what it believed were the flaws of the Muslims and Mujahideen of Syria as they were being targeted by Bashar and his thugs and allies? Or did it—on the contrary---begin to criticize, denounce and cast doubt on the religion and intentions of those Muslims and Mujahideen (in public and private) from the moment it announced its presence in Syria, until finally bloody strife broke out between it and them, strife which the Islamic State group refused to put an end to despite all the appeals and initiatives, and despite the fact that the Muslims and Mujahideen of Syria were (and still are) being targeted for annihilation by the Kaafir Bashar and his thugs and allies?

Resurgence: You—like a number of prominent members and leaders of al-Qa'eda—have over the past year been the target of vitriol and defamation because of your outspoken stance vis-à-vis Islamic State's deviations, with some even going so far as to accuse you of being a Western double agent and calling you "Lawrence of Afghanistan" or "Lawrence of al-Qa'eda" or similar names. Has this campaign of slander and defamation hurt you or had any effect on you or your points of view?

Adam: This sort of juvenile behavior and childish name-calling is something which anyone in the public eye must face and learn how to deal with; you just have to brush it off and move on as if nothing has happened. So the answer to your question is no, the negative reaction has not hurt me or had any effect on my positions.

Resurgence: Is it true that you accused the Islamic State group of being Kharijites in your eulogy of Shaykh Abu Khalid al-Suri (may Allah have mercy on him)?

Adam: No, I compared its behavior to the behavior of *Takfeeris* and Kharijites, but I didn't actually call it or its members *Takfeeris* or Kharijites. However, it has now become clear with the passage of time that this group which calls itself the Islamic State is riddled with *Takfeeris* and Kharijites even at the highest levels of leadership, as has been stated by Shaykh Abu Qatada al-Filisteeni and Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi in their fatwas and articles regarding the Islamic State group. But should the group as a whole be labeled as Kharijite? As I said, there may be people inside the group (and even in its leadership) who may not necessarily share the beliefs of the extremists or agree with what they are doing, and there may be other well-meaning individuals who have been deceived and need to have their misconceptions dispelled, and equating them with the criminals and murderers is not fair. Also, some people may mistakenly believe that as long as the group or its leadership has been declared Kharijite, it means that it is permissible or even obligatory to kill on sight anyone who belongs to the group or is affiliated with it or shares some of its ideas, a belief which is contrary to the position of the majority of Fuqahaa (Islamic jurists), who only permitted fighting or killing of Kharijites in certain circumstances and under certain conditions. That's why we have to be cautious about our words and not be hasty in labeling people as "Kharijites" merely because they are members of a particular group.

Resurgence: You've talked a lot today about *Takfeeris* and Kharijites and warned about them and their deviations. Some readers may be thinking: We're used to al-Qa'eda defending itself and other Mujahideen against the charges and allegations of Takfeerism and Kharijism which are often made against them, but since when has al-Qa'eda been concerned about combating *Takfeeris* and



Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed
(may Allah have mercy on him)


Shaykh Mansoor al-Shami
(may Allah have mercy on him)


Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Leebi
(may Allah have mercy on him)


Shaykh 'Attiyatullah
(may Allah have mercy on him)

Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed, Shaykh Mansoor al-Shami, Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Leebi and Shaykh 'Attiyatullah himself were quick to deal with any appearance of Takfeeri ideas in the ranks of the Mujahideen.

Kharijites?!

Adam: Actually, al-Qa'eda has been quite active throughout its history in combating Takfeerism and other forms of deviation which may appear now and then in the ranks of the Mujahideen and the Ummah in general. You can see this practically applied in the legacy of the *Shaheed* (martyr)—as we reckon him to be—Shaykh 'Attiyatullah al-Leebi (may Allah have mercy on him), who spoke and wrote extensively about the deviation of the GIA in Algeria, which he had witnessed personally, and also responded directly to some of the most prominent *shubuhaat* (misconceptions) of the *Takfeeris* in *Jawaab Su'aal fee Jihaad al-Daf' (An Answer to a Question About Defensive Jihad)*, a valuable book which deserves to be disseminated on a large scale and translated to as many languages as possible, especially in light of the recent and ongoing spread of *Takfeeri* ideas among non-Arabic speakers.

As for al-Qa'eda's history of combating Takfeerism, Shaykh 'Attiyatullah mentioned it in his interview of June 29, 2005 with Shaykh Rida Ahmad Samadi on the Ana al-Muslim network, saying:"Yes, the leaders [of Jihad] as well as the Shaykhs, students of knowledge and wise men played a positive and effective role in confronting the groups of Takfeer wal Hijrah which would sprout every now and then, and [confronting] other groups of Mubtadi'ah (innovators in religion) too. These efforts included using with them Da'wah and understanding and trying all types of education and enlightenment; advice and guidance; and argument and reform, followed by [if that failed] shunning, isolating and restraining them and warning against them and combating their evil and misguidance with the light of knowledge as well as with force; and I know for a fact that the brothers in al-Qa'eda declared the blood of some of them to be lawful and sought them out (they were some Libyans who deviated and became Kharijite Takfeeris), and this is something which the brothers who were around at that period know [i.e. the period of the Afghan Jihad against the Russians and Communists]."

This track record of combating these deviations and those who champion them continued during the Jihad against the Americans and their agents; and while I don't know that anyone's blood was declared lawful during this period, I do know that our Shaykhs like Shaykh Mustafa Abu al-Yazeed, Shaykh Mansoor al-Shami, Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Leebi and—of course—Shaykh 'Attiyatullah himself were quick to deal with any appearance of Takfeeri ideas in the ranks of the Mujahideen, however small or limited it may have been. If anyone under their command showed symptoms of this malignant disease, our Shaykhs would immediately have a word with him and explain to him that such ideas are wrong and unacceptable, and if necessary, they would enroll him in a specially-designed Shari'ah course in order to correct his misconceptions. This usually was enough to nip the problem in the bud. As for those outside al-Qa'eda, the Shaykhs would never shy away from confronting those of them which deviated in this regard, and they would work for reform to the best of their ability; and through these and similar policies, our Shaykhs were able to keep the problem to a minimum over the past decade and a half, at least in this theater of Jihad.

As for what lies behind this concern, the answer is simple: when we talk about Takfeerism, we are talking

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about a deviant ideology which destroys and defeats the Jihad and Mujahideen from within, and that is why it is not something to be taken lightly or an issue which can be neglected. Indeed, as Shaykh Attiyatullah pointed out in *An Answer to a Question About Defensive Jihad*, so harmful is this ideology to the interests of Islam and Muslims that the enemies of Islam turn a blind eye to its adherents even as they target the sincere and upright Muslims and Mujahideen for annihilation, because the enemies of Islam know that these extremists (after all is said and done) are primarily a danger to themselves and their fellow Muslims, not to the global system of Unbelief, and that their repulsive behavior and transgressions lend false credibility to official propaganda which labels Mujahideen as terrorists, criminals and (of course) "*Takfeeris* and Kharijites".

Not only that, but it is these very same enemies of Islam—like America and the Syrian, Saudi, Egyptian and Tunisian regimes—who are responsible in the first place for the appearance of deviations like what we see today in Syria and Iraq; and this is true even if we were to disregard the plausible theory that the regimes actively encourage and cultivate these deviations in order to use them to further their own interests. Consider for a moment: aren't these Satanic *Tawaagheet* the ones who have been methodically assassinating the veteran leaders of the Mujahideen and imprisoning and silencing the sincere and respected scholars of Jihad, thereby leaving many of the Islam-loving youth of the Ummah at a loss for direction and guidance? Aren't these Satanic *Tawaagheet* the ones who have been suppressing and repressing the people of Islam and Jihad for decades in such a brutal and relentless manner that, in the absence of wise leadership and independent, God-fearing 'Ulama, it's not surprising that the natural response of the zealous Muslim youth would be to cross limits and go to extremes?

I mention this in the interest of apportioning blame where blame is due, not to exonerate those who go astray or absolve them of responsibility for their words and actions.

Finally, I would like to clarify that if it seems that al-Qa'eda's focus on the issue of Takfeerism and deviancy in general is today more prominent, direct and in-your-face than before, then it is due to two factors: the first is the unprecedented size and extent of the problem today (as I mentioned earlier when comparing Islamic State with the GIA), which demands urgent measures from every Muslim to stop the further spread of the disease; and the second is the unfortunate fact that the deviancy developed this time within the ranks of al-Qa'eda and fed on its (well-intentioned) support of the brothers in Iraq which was used by IS to acquire its current legitimacy, influence and power. This obviously places a burden of responsibility on our shoulders this time which wasn't there in previous cases, and also requires us to clearly disassociate our methodology from the methodology of the deviants, lest it be mistakenly assumed that they are one and the same.

Resurgence: There are some people affiliated in one way or another with the Jihad movement who think that it is permitted to spill the blood of those who break their *bay'aat* (pledges or covenants of loyalty) to their ameer or call for him to be replaced or leave their group or start a new group, on the basis that they are *"Kharijites"* or *"Bughaat"* (rebels) or spreaders of *fitnah* or dividers of the ranks of the Mujahideen. Does this position have any basis in Shari'ah or in the *manhaj* of al-Qa'eda?

Adam: Absolutely not, and I think

I mentioned this earlier in passing while talking about the difference between Shaykh Usama's *manhaj* and the *manhaj* of some of those who falsely claim to be preserving his legacy. In fact, as Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri said in his magnum opus *Da'watul-Muqaawamatul-Islamiyyatul-Aalamiyyah (The Call of Global Islamic Resistance)*, it's a form of *tatarruf* (extremism) for a group of Mujahideen to accord themselves the right to try to crush any attempt to form another Jihadi group in their area, even if they justify this under the pretext that they are *"Jama'at al-Muslimeen"* (the Group of Muslims) a term which in actuality means a community of Muslims under a legitimate Imam (ruler) who has been given *Bay'at* by the Ummah and doesn't mean just any *"Jama'at"* made up of Muslims.

Someone who breaks his covenant or leaves a Jihadi group or starts another one without any *shar'i* justification or spreads dissent or discord in the ranks may well be mistaken, in error or guilty of major sins, but that doesn't mean that you can just go kill him or accuse him of being a spy or an apostate without proof. Even if he falsely accuses us of this or that or spreads lies about us, the solution isn't in spilling his blood, because a Muslim's blood is sacred, more sacred even than the Ka'aba, and spilling it without right is not only an act of oppression, it is the greatest sin after Kufr and Shirk; and oppression, sin and disobedience to Allah are some of the primary causes of defeat. This is why whenever we try to solve our internal problems, differences and disputes through recourse to the sword instead of discussion, negotiation and mutual consultation and understanding, Allah punishes us with more disunity and allows our enemy to defeat us.

Such mistaken positions as the one you have mentioned are based on ignorance of the Shari'ah and misinterpretations of Islamic texts; and that's if we rule out the role of lust for power and temporal authority in such un-Islamic stances.

Resurgence: When the formation of al-Qa'eda in the Indian Subcontinent was announced, it was interpreted as being part of a battle for dominance and supremacy between al-Qa'eda and Islamic State, and that the declaration of the new branch was an attempt to take back the initiative from the "caliphate." Is there any truth in this analysis?

Adam: The speakers in the declaration video were unambiguous in stating that the formation of al-Qa'eda in the Subcontinent was a gradual process spread out over a period of years and months. And I know for a fact that the actual formation of the branch was finalized in mid-2013, i.e. well before the break with the Iraqi branch. So the founding of the new branch had absolutely nothing to do with any perceived or presumed rivalry between al-Qa'eda and Islamic State. As for the timing of the announcement, it was purely a result of a combination of logistical factors and some political and strategic considerations.

As for talk of us trying to preserve dominance and supremacy or regain the ground we have allegedly lost to the Islamic State group, it is baseless, because as Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri—may Allah preserve him—made clear in his most recent interview with as-Sahab, and Shaykh Usama bin Ladin—may Allah have mercy on him—made clear before in his interview with senior journalist Taysir Allouni almost 13 years ago, al-Qa'eda is a message first and an organization second, and organiza-

> **"A Muslim's blood is sacred, more sacred even than the Ka'aba, and spilling it without right is not only an act of oppression, it is the greatest sin after Kufr and Shirk."**

Organizations are means to an end and not an end in and of themselves, and our loyalty and affiliation is first and foremost to the Ummah, of which we are an inseparable part.

tions are means to an end and not an end in and of themselves, and our loyalty and affiliation is first and foremost to the Ummah, of which we are an inseparable part, and which—after our reliance on Allah and adherence to Islam—is the secret of our strength; and this is why we are not—I repeat: not—in a battle for dominance and supremacy with any other Islamic organization or group, regardless of what some people might imagine; and we do not begrudge anyone their success: on the contrary, as long as their actions are compliant with Islamic principles and laws and they are working for the interest of Islam and Muslims, we will be the first to congratulate them on their successes and victories. Our position towards Islamic State, like our position toward the Islamic groups which tried to detour around the path of *Da'wah* and Jihad by taking the path of democracy to effect change, is not out of jealousy for its successes or because we are afraid of being eclipsed by it, but rather, our opposition to it—as I have made clear—is because of its being built on falsehood, because of its violation of some of the most basic of Islamic laws and principles and because of its working for its own interests at the expense of the greater interest of the Ummah.

Resurgence: But let's play devil's advocate for a moment: surely you have to admit that al-Qa'eda's support base seems to be shrinking and its narrative seems to be losing appeal in front of the advance and apparent success of Islamic State?

Adam: This is the propaganda; but wasn't it just two or three years ago that the same people that are now talking about al-Qa'eda having the proverbial rug being pulled out from under it by Islamic State were telling us that al-Qa'eda's message, support base and raison d'être had been eclipsed, eroded or wiped out by the popularity (and therefore the "success") of the Islamic political parties in the peaceful "revolutions" of the Arab Spring? So where are those political parties today and where is al-Qa'eda? The heroes of the ballot box and peaceful change—despite the undeniable popularity they once had—have been relegated to the military junta's prisons or—at most—the opposition seats of parliament, while al-Qa'eda continues—by the grace of Allah—to operate and expand and is today more widespread and united than ever before, boasting strong, active and mature branches in the Islamic Maghreb, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, the countries of the Levant, and now the Indian Subcontinent. Meanwhile, al-Qa'eda's message that armed Jihad and rejection of compromise with the enemies of Islam are essential elements of change is now something of which Muslims are convinced, particularly after they witnessed the brutal crushing of many of the popular uprisings in the bloody counterrevolutions led by secularists, Rafidites and pseudo-Salafists and backed by Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Gulf statelets.

In a nutshell, then, al-Qa'eda and its methodology is—by the grace of Allah—as strong as ever if not stronger, and I frankly don't see any difference between the current wave of propaganda concerning al-Qa'eda losing to Islamic State and the previous wave of propaganda concerning al-Qa'eda losing to "moderate" Islamists. And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: America's northern neighbor and frequent partner-in-crime, Canada, was recently shaken by a series of attacks on soldiers and the parliament buildings carried out by attackers said to have been inspired by or sympathetic to the Islamic State group. In light of al-Qa'eda's stance vis-à-vis the Islamic State group, does it support such operations?

Adam: Absolutely! We in al-Qa'eda have been consistent in calling for attacks on America and its Crusader allies, and it's no secret that Canada is complicit both in the American invasion and occupation of Afghanistan as well as the new Crusade against Iraq and Syria, and that makes it a legitimate target for the Mujahideen, whether groups or individuals. That's why we support these operations and ask Allah to accept those who carried them out as martyrs. And my advice to Muslims in the West who are thinking of going to Syria or Iraq to join the Islamic State group is to

My advice to Muslims in the West

Carry out armed attacks against the enemies at home

instead follow in the footsteps of these two brothers and carry out armed attacks against the enemies at home.

Resurgence: Prior to the American strikes targeting the Nusra Front in Syria, there were suggestions from certain quarters that al-Nusra represents the new face of al-Qa'eda and is evidence of a move toward a softening or moderation of its stance which may open up an opportunity for the wider world to change the way they deal with it, especially given the West's apparent preoccupation with the threat of Islamic State. So has al-Qa'eda really softened its stance? And is the suggestion of a possible change in relations between it and the rest of the world realistic in your view, particularly in light of the Crusader aggression against the Syrian branch and the ongoing drone campaigns in Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia?

Adam: I don't know exactly who or what lay behind those suggestions or whether they represented an attempt to test the waters or were little more than speculation, but if there were or are people who are hoping that they might be able to co-opt al-Nusra Front for their own nefarious purposes, then I'm afraid they're going to be sorely disappointed. We are nobody's agents.

As for the question of a softening of our stance, I don't think there has been any change, because the reality is that our leaders—foremost among them Shaykh Usama and Shaykh Ayman—have always been clear that if any of the peoples and governments of the Crusader West and those who revolve around it are willing to change their ways, give back the rights they have taken from us as Muslims, and refrain from further aggression against us, further interference in our affairs and further backing of those who oppress our peoples and occupy our lands, then we are fully prepared to deal with them on a basis of mutual interest and respect for treaties and accords. If they are interested in correcting their mistakes and doing what needs to be done, then we have absolutely no interest whatsoever in prolonging the war for so much as another minute.

So this has always been our stance; as for the likelihood of there being a truce between us and the Crusader West in the near future, the sad fact is that Western halls of power are dominated by militants, extremists and those beholden to the Zionist and corporate lobbies, and experience shows that elements like these are unlikely to listen to the voice of reason; and I think that recent and ongoing events—particularly the Western-backed Zionist aggression against Gaza and the new Crusade against Iraq and Syria—demonstrate that our enemies have not changed their ways and have no intention of doing so in the near future, which means that our Jihad will continue and more citizens of Western countries will have to die for the sake of Western powers' continued dominance of our region and interference in its affairs.

Resurgence: When America and its allies and proxies began their aggression against Syria, America didn't acknowledge that it struck al-Nusra Front: rather, it claimed that it targeted a branch of al-Qa'eda which no one had ever heard of before called "Khorasan". What's this all about?

Adam: "Khorasan" is a branch of

al-Qa'eda which no one had heard of before chiefly because it doesn't exist. Let me be direct, succinct and to the point: al-Qa'eda's one and only official branch in Syria is al-Nusra Front, and it doesn't recognize any other name or maintain organizational ties with any other group in the country. Therefore, the "Khorasan group" is al-Nusra Front, and al-Nusra Front is the "Khorasan group". There is no difference between them. But America announced it had targeted "Khorasan" because for it to openly come out and declare that it is attacking the Nusra Front means entering into direct and immediate confrontation with the blessed Syrian revolution of which the Nusra Front is an integral part, whereas America and its allies want confrontation with the revolution and rehabilitation of the regime in Damascus to be a slow, gradual process based on lies, double-dealing and recruitment of local agents and proxies in order to create a so-called moderate opposition (read: Syrian versions of the Abu Rishas, the Abu Azzams and the other stars of General Petraeus's so-called "Awakening Councils" in Iraq). But in this they shall fail, Allah willing, because the Muslims of Syria are well aware of how the "Awakening Councils" experiment turned out for their Muslim brothers in Iraq.

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Talk of targeting this non-existent group called "Khorasan" is also part of a not-so-subtle attempt to differentiate between the Syrian Mujahideen and the non-Syrian Mujahideen (i.e. the *muhajireen* from beyond the borders) who are labeled as "foreign fighters" by the Americans and British and their allies (the implication being that the Americans and Europeans themselves were born and bred in Syria and Iraq!). So "Khorasan" is a Crusader euphemism for the non-Syrian element of al-Nusra Front. But no one should imagine that they are fooling anyone with ruses like this; and any attempt to separate the Syrian Mujahideen from the so-called "foreign fighters" or drive a wedge between them by targeting one group and courting the other or playing name games is doomed to failure, because an attack on one is an attack on all. Period.

Resurgence: In brief, what are the main lessons that the Mujahideen should learn from the experience in Syria?

Adam: One lesson to be learned is that the Mujahideen are not doomed to live and work on the margins of society unless they themselves decide to exist on the



Whenever personal or organizational interests are put before the greater interest of Islam and Muslims, it has devastating consequences for the Jihad of the Ummah.

margins. The popular welcome and support accorded to the brothers in the Nusra Front belies the claim that the Mujahideen will never find a place in the hearts of the Muslims, and it shows the positive effects of learning from experience and correcting mistakes, something which is a must for any organization, group or fighting force.

Perhaps the most important lesson for us is that whenever personal or organizational interests are put before the greater interest of Islam and Muslims, it has devastating consequences for the Jihad of the Ummah. The Mujahideen in Syria were making great gains and on the verge of toppling the Syrian regime by the grace of Allah first and their operational unity and collaborative spirit second, but when a certain faction interfered and gave precedence to its own interests, it caused a catastrophic chain reaction which enabled the Syrian regime and its allies to regain their balance and recover some of the ground they had earlier lost; and now another enemy has entered the fray: the American-led coalition which is intervening to rescue the regime under the pretext of fighting the same faction whose earlier interference led to the weakening of the revolutionary Islamic bloc in Syria and the strengthening of parties and entities with dubious motives and suspicious links.

One can't say it enough: groups, organizations and ameers are not things to be fought for; rather, they are means to an end, which is the unification and empowerment of Muslims so they can establish their religion and defend it and themselves against their enemies; and whenever these names and entities become ends in and of themselves and we lose sight of the bigger picture and the greater interest of the Ummah, it is then that we suffer setbacks, defeat and humiliation.

There are many other lessons which can be learned from the Jihad in Syria, but these are the ones that come to mind at the moment.

Resurgence: So to sum up, how do you view the Jihadi movement in the light of the experience in Syria over the last three years? Is the liberation of al-Aqsa an imminent possibility in the present scenario?

Adam: The Jihad in Syria, being the cumulative result of the combined efforts and sacrifices of generations of Mujahideen, martyrs, captives and callers to Islam, is an *amaanah* (trust) which we are duty-bound to preserve and give the respect it deserves. I hope that the setback suffered it has will be a temporary setback and that the Mujahideen in Syria in particular and the region in general will soon regain the momentum they lost, if, that is, the necessary steps are taken to keep the Jihad movement in Syria on the correct path and preserve it from all kinds of *Ifraat* (excessiveness) and *Tafreet* (negligence and dereliction).

As for the liberation of al-Aqsa, it may not be imminent, but I think it is getting steadily closer with each passing day and each new victory. We just ask Allah to make us deserving of the honor. And I think the raising of the flag of the Syrian revolution over the Qunaytra crossing with the occupied Golan Heights, as well as the heroic resistance of the Mujahideen of Gaza and general population in the face of the recent Israeli aggression and their humbling of the Jewish entity, are both good omens. May Allah grant victory to the sincere Mujahideen in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Subcontinent and everywhere else. Aameen.

Resurgence: Before we move on to other topics, do you have a final message for our sincere brothers in the Islamic State group and quarters sympathetic to it?

Adam: Yes. I know that much of what I have said today will not sit well with many of you; in fact, it has probably upset you greatly. But I would just ask you to try to calm down and take some time to reflect on my words.

My dear brothers: declaring Muslims to be outside the fold of Islam is not a trivial matter or something to be taken lightly. Spilling the blood, taking the wealth and violating the rights of Muslims is not a trivial matter or something to be taken lightly. Oppression of any kind is wrong, and will be darkness for its perpetrator on the Day of Judgement. The Ummah's Jihad is not a video game; it is real life, with real consequences, in this world

MY DEAR BROTHERS

- Declaring Muslims to be outside the fold of Islam is not a trivial matter or something to be taken lightly.
- Spilling the blood, taking the wealth and violating the rights of Muslims is not a trivial matter or something to be taken lightly.
- The Ummah's Jihad is not a video game; it is real life, with real consequences, in this world and the next.
- When you pick up a weapon, you are responsible for it and for what you do with it.
- When you declare yourselves to be 'the' Islamic State, you are responsible if your actions and behavior distorts the image of the Islamic system of government in the eyes of the Ummah and the world.

and the next. When you pick up a weapon, you are responsible for it and for what you do with it. When you control territory and run governments and administrations, you are responsible for the people of those territories and responsible for how you treat them and what happens to them. When you declare yourselves to be "the" Islamic State, you are responsible if your actions and behavior distorts the image of the Islamic system of government in the eyes of the Ummah and the world.

My dear brothers: while no one can deny the considerable strength and prowess of the Islamic State group in military terms, at the same time, the crimes it has committed against Muslims cannot simply be overlooked or forgotten with time, because in Islam there is no statute of limitations: there is only *tawbah* (repentance); and if these wrongs are not brought to an end and rectified here in this world, then a severe punishment has been promised both for those who committed them as well as those who encouraged, condoned or justified them, even if from behind a computer or mobile phone thousands of miles away. This is why we advise you for the sake of Allah to stop these transgressions immediately and restore rights to their owners.

Perhaps there are some who are thinking to themselves, "Why should I worry? I'm a Mujahid. I will attain martyrdom and my sins will be forgiven with the first drop of my blood!" My reply to that is threefold:

First, how can one be certain that he will die the death of a Shaheed and not die a normal death?

Second, even if he dies the death of a Shaheed, how can he be certain that his martyrdom will be accepted by Allah? In other words, not every Shaheed in the *Dunya* is a Shaheed in the *Aakhirah*. Surely you have heard the *hadeeth* (found in the *Saheeh* of Muslim and elsewhere) about the man who was killed in battle and called a Shaheed by the Muslims, but the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) informed them that he was in fact being punished in the Hellfire because he took a piece of clothing from the war booty without right. This is a man who was deprived of martyrdom and sent to hell because of a piece of clothing he took without right, so what about someone who has taken a life without right, or taken positions of power and leadership without right?!

Third, even if one's martyrdom is accepted, not every sin is automatically forgiven. In the *hadeeth* found in the Saheeh of Muslim and other collections of *ahaadeeth*, a man asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "If I were to be killed in the path of Allah, will my sins be expiated?" He replied, "Yes, if you are killed in the path of Allah, while patient and sincere (to Allah), facing the enemy and not fleeing [...] except for *al-dayn* (debt), for Jibreel has (just) told me that."The 'Ulama such as al-Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) and others have said that the word *al-dayn* in this *hadeeth* refers to the rights of human beings in general, and not just their financial rights, and indicates that Jihad, martyrdom and other righteous

My dear brothers, I leave you with this thought: Allah has not placed us on this earth to establish states. Rather, He created us to worship Him and abide by His laws and limits. He placed us here as a test, and if establishing and defending a particular state requires us to violate the most basic and fundamental of His laws or causes us to lose our Aakhirah, then what good is there in this state?!

deeds only redeem the rights of Allah and don't redeem the rights of men; and this is why it is obligatory to restore all rights to their owners here and now, before it's too late and regret is of no use.

Isn't it time for a review and inspection of intentions and deeds and a sincere repentance, lest one come on the Day of Judgement to find all his good deeds blown away like dust is blown away by the wind? Haven't you heard the authentic *hadeeth* related by Muslim and others in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked his Companions: "Do you know who the bankrupt one is?" They replied, "The bankrupt one among us is the one who has neither dirhams nor belongings." He said, "No, the bankrupt one from my Ummah is the one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with *Salaat* (prayers), *Siyaam* (fasting) and *Zakaat* (alms), except that he insulted one person, and impugned the chastity of another person, and devoured the wealth of another, and spilled the blood of someone else, and struck so-and-so. And so everyone he wronged is given some of his good deeds (as compensation), until when his store of good deeds is exhausted before his debts are settled, some of their sins are transferred onto him and he is thrown into Hellfire."

My dear brothers, I leave you with this thought: Allah has not placed us on this earth to establish states. Rather, He created us to worship Him and abide by His laws and limits. He placed us here as a test, and if establishing and defending a particular state requires us to violate the most basic and fundamental of His laws or causes us to lose our *Aakhirah*, then what good is there in this state?! Please take a moment to reflect on the wise words of the *Shaheed*—as we reckon him to be—Shaykh 'Attiyatullah al-Leebi (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Let us always consider something important. How will we have benefited if we were to achieve victory against the enemies and subdue them and destroy them and take our revenge against them and establish the state we want (the State of Islam) and be the victors in this war and conflict, yet Allah is angry with us because of our disobedience to Him and our open and secret sins, and we end up in the Aakhirah (next world) entering Hellfire (we seek refuge with Allah). Didn't the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say, 'Allah may help this religion with an immoral person?' So the important conclusion and the eternal and obligatory naseehah (advice) is: that we stay true to Allah's religion and His Shari'ah and His rules openly and secretly, in ourselves and in our private and public actions, and then in those whom we are responsible for, including our families, followers, subjects and all our affairs…" (from 'To My Brothers, the Ameers of the Mujahideen').



May Allah—*'azza wa jal*—open all our hearts to the truth, guide us to what He loves and is pleased with and unite us in obedience to Him.

Resurgence: Aameen. Now for the obligatory question without which no interview would be complete: how did you hear about the September 11th operations and what was your reaction?

Adam: Hmm. Let's see…it was about 5:30 in the afternoon Qandahar time. I had just returned home from the bazaar, and when I turned on the radio and tuned it to the BBC, the first thing I remember hearing was the host was asking his guests, "Who could have done an operation like this?" My first thought was that the death of Ahmad Shah Massoud had been confirmed and they were now trying to digest the news, because as you know, he had been the

target of an attack two days before and the word around town was that he was in fact dead, contrary to official claims of him being lightly injured. But as I listened further to the broadcast, it became clear that they were talking about something else altogether, something bigger—*much* bigger. Slowly and piece by piece, the picture began to develop: New York, Washington, the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, hijacked passenger aircraft, etc.; and I think it was when the announcer confirmed that the second WTC tower had just collapsed and that both towers were now down that the enormity of the whole thing really hit me.

As for my reaction, it was a mix of surprise, amazement and exhilaration as well as some apprehension, at least in the very beginning. The magnitude of the operations, the unprecedented damage they caused and the fact that I had no doubts whatsoever about who was behind them made me entertain the possibility that Qandahar could be the target of American aggression that very night! The feeling passed, however, after I calmed down a bit and was able to think things over in a rational manner.

Resurgence: What was the reaction of those around you to the operations?

Adam: Many people didn't sleep that night. I certainly didn't. There was a celebratory atmosphere, with cars full of Mujahideen driving around and groups of brothers walking and talking in the streets. People were congratulating each other on this incredible and historic victory with which Allah had favored us. I remember some brothers said that now that Allah had blessed them to see America's nose rubbed in the dirt and the myth of its invincibility debunked, they were totally 100% ready for martyrdom: i.e., after an experience like this, what more could they possibly want from this worldly life?

That was a sample of the reaction of the brothers in al-Qa'eda in particular and the Arabs and non-Afghan *muhajireen* in general. As for the Afghan brothers, I will relate one story to give you a sense of their reaction. It was about a week after the operations—and perhaps just a day or two after the announcement of the death of Massoud—and I was walking along the main road when a driver stopped his car and offered me a ride home. He was an older Talib—perhaps in his mid-forties—whose leg had been amputated and who wore a black turban. As soon as I got into the car, he began to talk excitedly about the September 11th operations and the attack on Massoud, and how the Arab Mujahideen were the best Mujahideen in the world (he thought I was an Arab); and this continued for the entire duration of the ride (actually only about two minutes because he picked me up close to home). And as I was about to get out of the car, he told me one more thing which struck me: he told me he wanted to carry out a martyrdom operation too and asked if I could help him! So if this was the direction the Afghans were going in even before the Crusader invasion of Afghanistan, it's no surprise then that the martyrdom operation would later become an important weapon of the Afghans in their blessed Jihad against America and her allies and puppets.

There's another amusing anecdote I'd like to mention in the context of people's reaction to the operations. I was with David Hicks ("Abu Muslim the Australian"—may Allah guide him) a few weeks after the operations, perhaps just before the American bombing began, and I asked him jokingly if he had ever thought he would live to see the start of World War 3, to which he replied, "Yes, but I didn't think it would be started by people who eat *naan* (Afghan flatbread) and drink *chai* (Afghan green tea)!" In other words, he didn't expect it to be started by people of such modest means and simple lifestyles.

Resurgence: Did you know any of the martyrs of the September 11th operations?

Adam: I knew a couple of the brothers fairly well, specifically Brother Julaybeeb (Hamza al-Ghamdi—may Allah accept him), who was a cheerful guy who was always helping out with cooking and other chores, and Brother 'Urwah al-Taaifi (Hani Hanjour—may Allah accept him), who spent some time with us on the Qarabagh frontline north of Kabul, and who I remember asked me once while we both were at the Ghulam Badshah guesthouse (which was located in the Karte Parwan neighborhood of Kabul) about domestic flights in America and whether security on them was less strict than on international flights, to which I replied in the affirmative. So it seems he had already been recruited for the operation by that time (late 1999).

As I listened further to the broadcast, it became clear that they were talking about something else altogether, something bigger—much bigger.



Shaykh Osama bin Laden
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Muhammad Atta
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Shaykh Abdul Aziz al-Omari
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Ahmad al Haznawi
(may Allah have mercy on him)



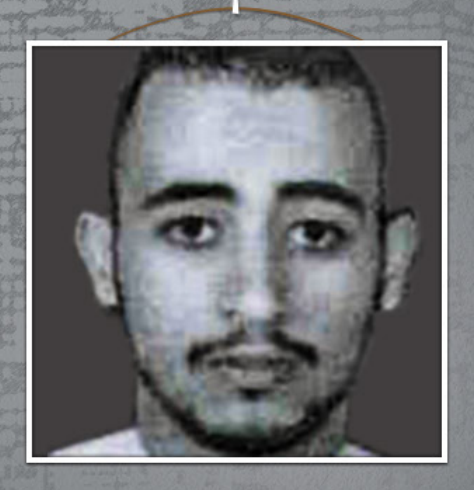
Saeed al Ghamidi
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Hamza al Ghamidi
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Mohand Fayiz al Shehri
(may Allah have mercy on him)



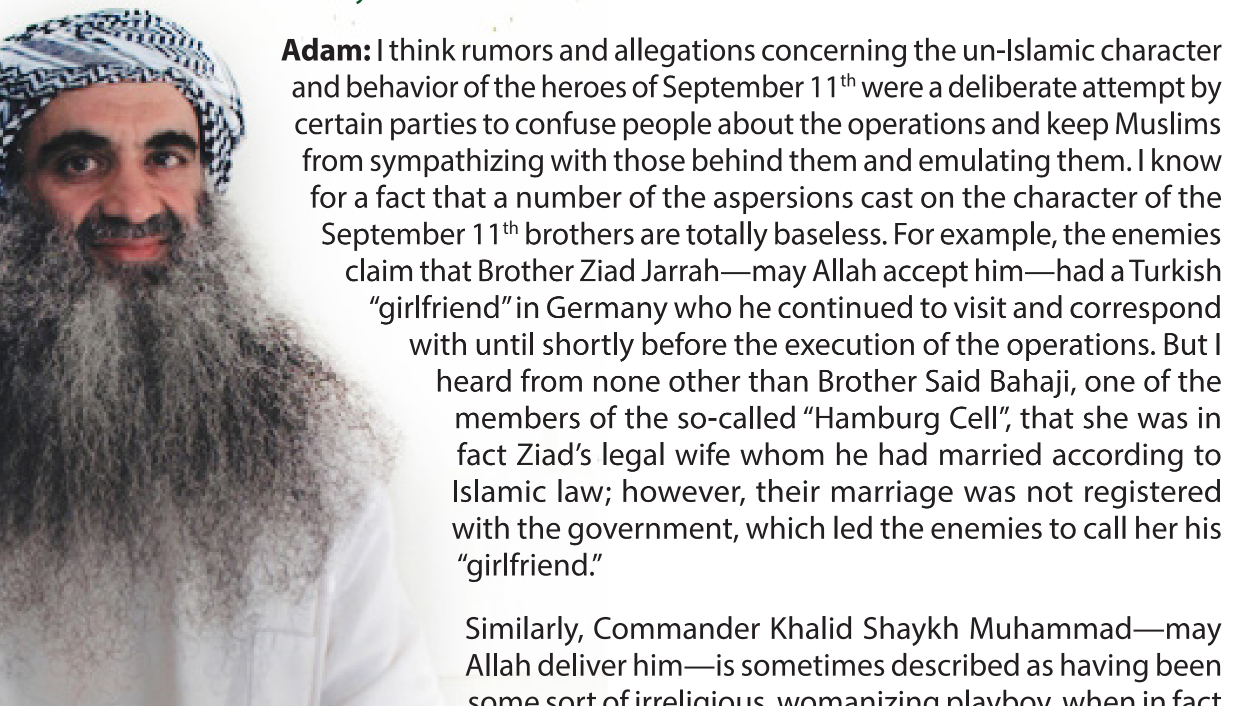
Hani Hasan Hanjour
(may Allah have mercy on him)

He and Khalid each tried to finish reciting the entire Qur'an in seven days, which is how the Prophet—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—used to recite it.

By the way, Hani Hanjour is—as far as I know—the only one of the four pilots to have received flight training and a commercial pilot's license before preparations commenced for the operation, which perhaps explains how he was able to seemingly effortlessly execute the difficult 330-degree turn and high-speed, low-altitude approach needed to hit the Pentagon, but the irony is that the conspiracy theorists insist on portraying him as a novice student with poor piloting skills in order to support their theory that a missile hit the Pentagon and not a plane!

As for the other brothers, I must have seen or met most of them either in Kabul or in Qandahar, but I really can't recall any of them, other than Brother al-Jarraah al-Ghamdi (Ahmad al-Haznawi—may Allah accept him) who I am able to place only because he was the master of ceremonies at a wedding party that was held at the airport complex. I may also have exchanged greetings with Brother Abu al-Abbas al-Janoobi (Abdulaziz al-Omari—may Allah accept him) during a visit to the offices of as-Sahab in Qandahar.

Resurgence: Speaking of conspiracy theorists, one of the claims they have often put forward as "proof" of the falseness of the official version of 9/11 is that that some of those alleged to have planned and carried out the operations were "known" to have engaged—in the period in which they were supposed to be preparing for the operations—in forms of sin and debauchery inconsistent with what one would expect to be the behavior of Muslims about to become martyrs for Islam. Does this oft-repeated claim have any factual basis?



Adam: I think rumors and allegations concerning the un-Islamic character and behavior of the heroes of September 11th were a deliberate attempt by certain parties to confuse people about the operations and keep Muslims from sympathizing with those behind them and emulating them. I know for a fact that a number of the aspersions cast on the character of the September 11th brothers are totally baseless. For example, the enemies claim that Brother Ziad Jarrah—may Allah accept him—had a Turkish "girlfriend" in Germany who he continued to visit and correspond with until shortly before the execution of the operations. But I heard from none other than Brother Said Bahaji, one of the members of the so-called "Hamburg Cell", that she was in fact Ziad's legal wife whom he had married according to Islamic law; however, their marriage was not registered with the government, which led the enemies to call her his "girlfriend."

Similarly, Commander Khalid Shaykh Muhammad—may Allah deliver him—is sometimes described as having been some sort of irreligious, womanizing playboy, when in fact everyone who knows him knows he is a devoted family man with a great love for Islam from an early age. You can see his zeal for Islam clearly in the words of Shaykh Abdullah 'Azzam (may Allah have mercy on him), who, in an article in *al-Jihad* Magazine eulogizing 'Aabid Shaykh Muhammad (Khalid's brother who was martyred in the Afghan Jihad against the Russians—may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that he (i.e. Shaykh Abdullah Azzam) spent time during one of the major battles with Khalid, whom he called "the Secretary," and that Khalid loved to listen to Qur'anic recitation, and that both he and Khalid each tried to finish reciting the entire Qur'an

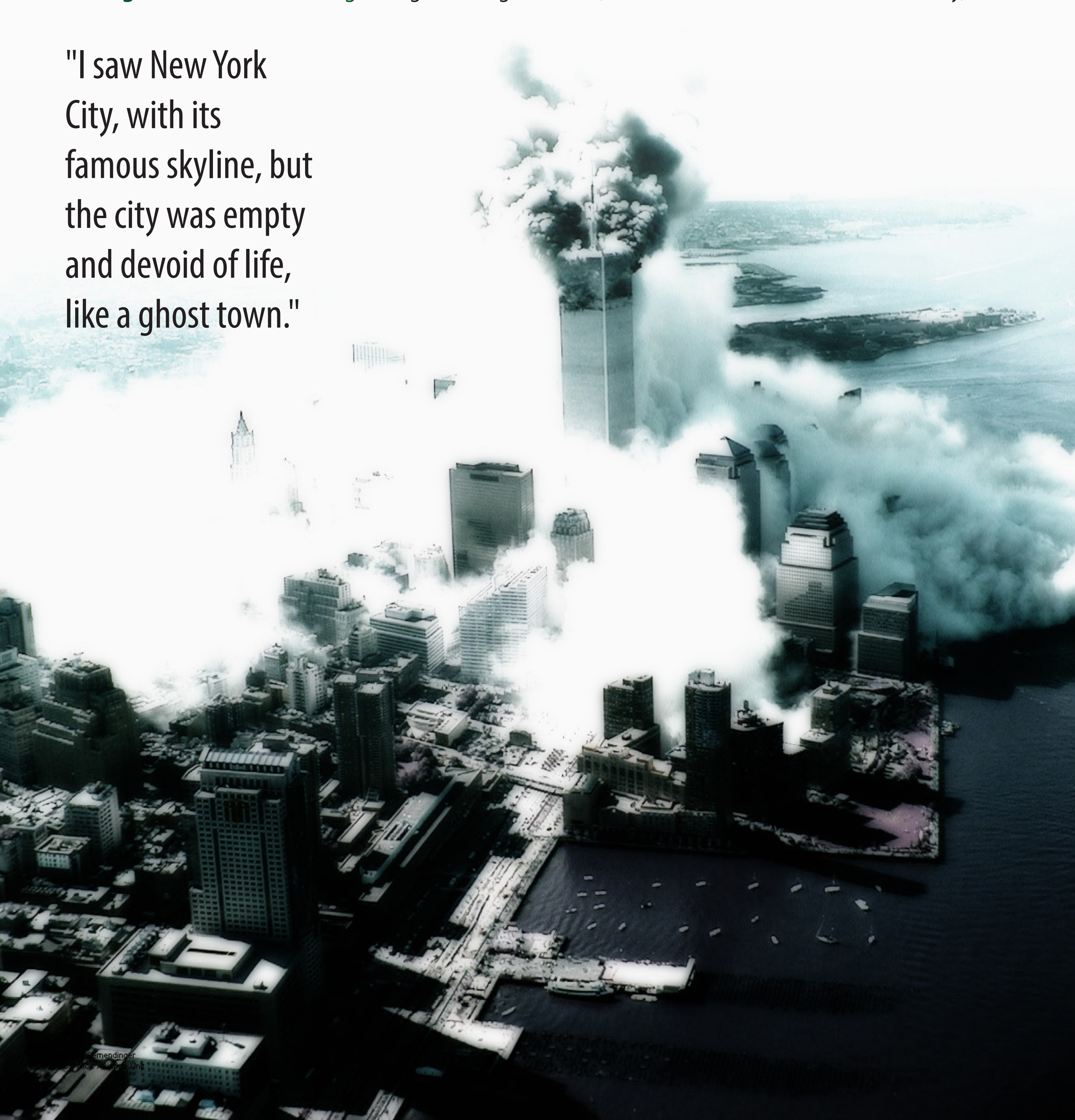
in seven days, which is how the Prophet—peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—used to recite it. Obviously, this is not the description of a man with a superficial connection to Islam. And those who want to read more can find Shaykh 'Azzam's eulogy of 'Aabid Shaykh Muhammad in a compilation of articles and transcripts entitled *'Ushaaq al-Hoor (Lovers of Houries)*.

Resurgence: One of the things brothers talk about in connection with September 11th is the prophetic dreams which were seen by a number of people before the operations. Can you tell us about some of these dreams?

Adam: Yes. One dream I overheard being related second-hand in late 1999 while at the Ghulam Badshah guesthouse went something like this: "A brother saw in his dream that he was flying, and he entered a large building or a tower, and then an angel struck the building with his wing, and it fell down." This was around the same time that Brother 'Urwah asked me about security on flights; and some of the other pilots may also have been staying in Kabul then.

Another dream which was related to me just a few months before the operations, and which I heard directly from the mouth of the brother who saw it , was as follows: "I saw New York City, with

"I saw New York City, with its famous skyline, but the city was empty and devoid of life, like a ghost town."



its famous skyline, but the city was empty and devoid of life, like a ghost town." The brother interpreted it as meaning that there might be some sort of an attack on New York City which might cause the city to be evacuated, an interpretation which I took with a grain of salt at the time! I should mention that the brother who saw this dream had absolutely nothing to do with the operations and would not have known anything about them. And I totally forgot about this dream until one of the brothers reminded me of it a few days after September 11th.

There was at least one other dream I heard before the operations involving towers and some sort of aircraft, again seen by someone with no connection to the operations and (moreover) no connection to al-Qa'eda—he was a businessman visiting from the Arabian Gulf—but the two I have mentioned here are the most direct and explicit and the ones which have stayed with me over the years.

I should point out in this context that these sorts of visions were not limited to the run up to September 11th; rather, they were regularly seen before other major operations as well, to the extent that Shaykh Usama had to forbid people from relating any dreams they might have had just before the attack on the destroyer USS Cole, because so many people were seeing dreams about attacks on ships and Jihad at sea that the Shaykh was afraid that the operation would be compromised or uncovered by the enemies if they got wind of this "chatter"!

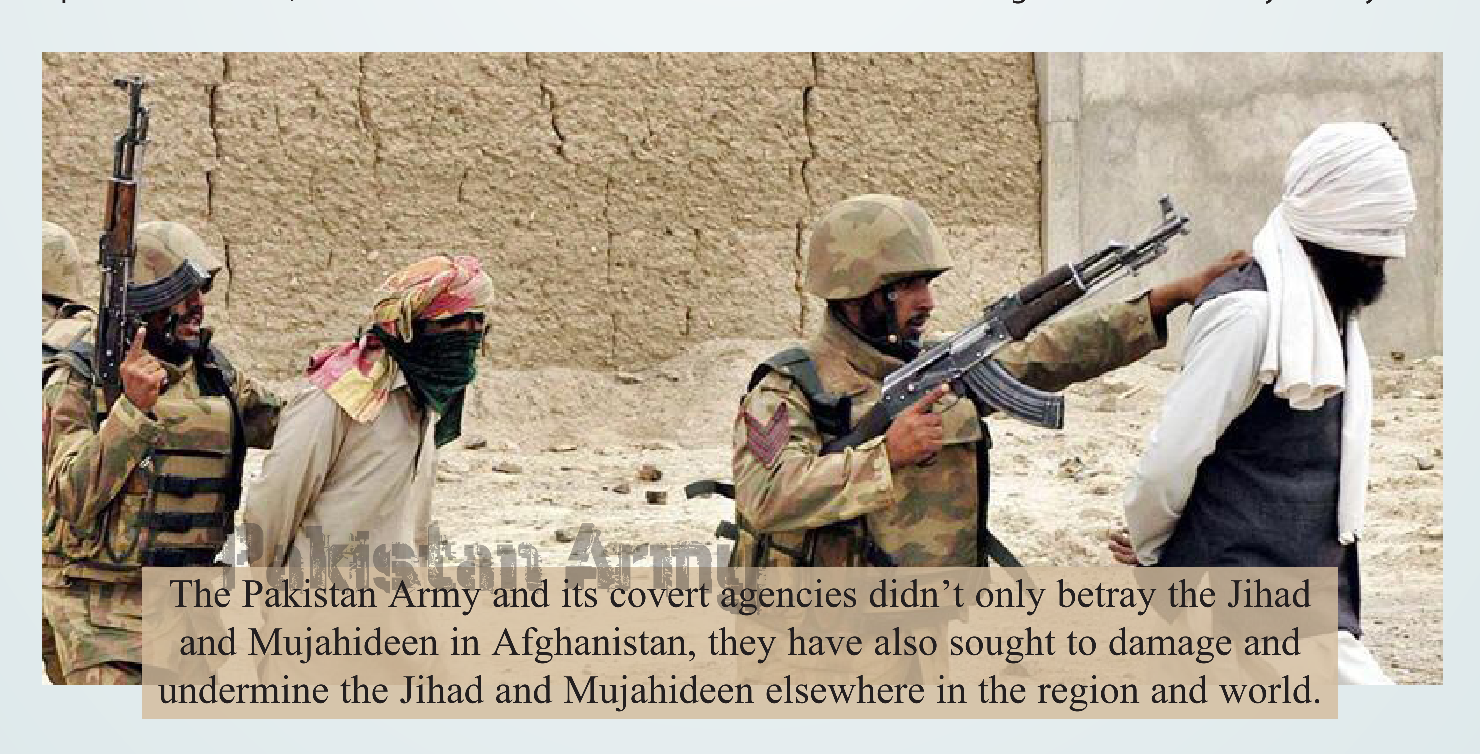
Resurgence: Let's talk a little about the aftermath. How damaging was the role of the Pakistani intelligence agencies and the Army after the events of 9/11?

Adam: The decision the Pakistani regime made to support the American aggression against Afghanistan was critical to the success of that aggression, which may not even have gone ahead were it not for Pakistan's U-turn on its Afghanistan policy and its permitting its airspace and airfields to be used by American warplanes to attack the Muslim Afghan people and its waters, ports and roads to be used by the American military to transport soldiers and materiel. This is why the Pakistani army and intelligence agencies bear a major part of the responsibility for the toppling of the Islamic Emirate and the occupation of Afghanistan.

The Pakistan Army and its intelligence agencies are also responsible for the abduction of hundreds of emigrant Mujahideen—both commanders and soldiers—and their "rendition" to Guantanamo and other prisons, dungeons and concentration camps around the world, where many of them were subjected to torture and summary execution; and that's not counting the thousands of local and emigrant Mujahideen and their supporters who have been imprisoned, tortured and "disappeared" or died in mysterious circumstances within Pakistan.

After initially limiting themselves to playing the role of a glorified kidnap gang, the Pak Army and its intelligence agencies would soon also take on a second role: that of a glorified spotter for America's drone program, all the while protesting their innocence and condemning the Predator and Reaper strikes even as they worked hand-in-hand with the Americans to find and murder the heroes of Islam in Waziristan and adjacent tribal areas; and this collusion with the Americans and other enemies of Islam continues even as we speak.

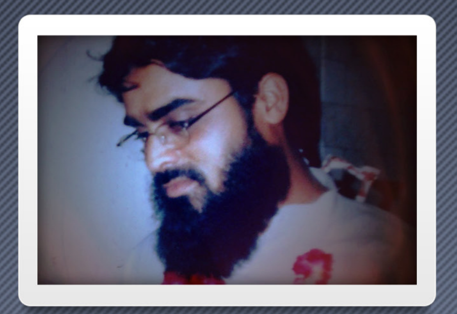
The Pakistan Army and covert agencies didn't only betray the



The Pakistan Army and its covert agencies didn't only betray the Jihad and Mujahideen in Afghanistan, they have also sought to damage and undermine the Jihad and Mujahideen elsewhere in the region and world.



Shaykh Ahsan Aziz
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Dr. Arshad Waheed
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Dr. Sarbuland Zubair Khan
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Major Aadil Abdul Quddoos
(may Allah have mercy on him)



Hasan Gul
(may Allah have mercy on him)

Jihad and Mujahideen in Afghanistan, they have also sought to damage and undermine the Jihad and Mujahideen elsewhere in the region and world; and one example of this is how they have stopped the Mujahideen in Kashmir from operating in "Azad" Kashmir and begun a disgraceful rapprochement with the Indian government at the expense of the weak and oppressed Muslims of Kashmir and other regions in India, who continue to fall victim to Hindu aggression and barbarism without the so-called Islamic army of Pakistan doing anything to help them, mainly because it is too busy committing similar aggression and barbarism against its own people in the Pushtun tribal areas and Baluchistan. But despite all I have mentioned, we still find people who insist that the Pakistani state is an Islamic state and its army and defense establishment is one of the mainstays of the Ummah's security!

Resurgence: How was your time in Pakistan after the fall of the Islamic Emirate?

Adam: While in Pakistan, I and my emigrant brothers were blessed by Allah to have numerous *Ansaar* (supporters) who combined *Nusra* (support) with *Hijrah* (emigration), Jihad and *Istishhaad* (seeking of martyrdom), and who hosted and sheltered us and did their best to take care of all our needs despite the difficulties and risks. We are greatly indebted to them all, and If I could, I would mention and thank all of them by name, but because I know that naming them could compromise their security, I will only mention a few of those who have embraced martyrdom or will not be harmed by being mentioned:

—Brother Saud Memon (may Allah have mercy on him), a wealthy businessman and philanthropist who, in the days after the withdrawal of the Islamic Emirate from major Afghan cities, helped to evacuate most of the senior leadership of al-Qa'eda to Karachi and shelter them before being forced to go undercover himself. He was eventually captured in South Africa and mistreated in American and Pakistani custody until he succumbed to illness and continuous mental and physical torture in 2007. May Allah take revenge on those who caused his death.

—Shaheed Engineer Ahsan Aziz (may Allah have mercy on him), who was able to find among his numerous friends and acquaintances a number of brave and sincere people willing to shelter us despite the threat.

—Shaheed Commander Dr. Arshad Waheed (may Allah have mercy on him).

—Shaheed Commander Hasan Gul (may Allah have mercy on him) and his family.

—Commander Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (may Allah deliver him) and his nephews, family and friends (may Allah accept their martyrs and free their captives).

—Shaheed Dr. Sarbuland Zubair Khan (may Allah have mercy on him).



All the indicators are pointing to the likelihood of the return of the Islamic Emirate bigger, better and stronger than ever before: soon, with Allah's permission.

—Shaheed Major 'Adil Abdul Quddoos (may Allah have mercy on him) .

—Shaheed Rafiullah Jani Khel Wazir (may Allah have mercy on him) and his family.

—Shaheed 'Azmat 'Ali Wazir and his brothers and family (may Allah have mercy on them).

—Shaheed Professor Sadiq Noor Mussaki Dawar (may Allah have mercy on him) and his family.

—Shaheed Commander Dr. Nasrullah Mehsud (may Allah have mercy on him) and his Mujahid brothers and family (may Allah preserve them).

—And many others, too many to mention here. May Allah accept it from them and us and accept all our good deeds and forgive all our sins and shortcomings.

Resurgence: Did you have any close calls with the police and intelligence units?

Adam: I actually come close to being captured at least twice while staying in Karachi in 2002, and it was only the grace of Allah and His mercy and protection that came between me and falling into the clutches of the Americans and their Pakistani agents. The first time was in the late spring or early summer; we were staying at a house which was being used as an office for media work (and a guesthouse for some senior leaders and members of the group), when word came from a source in Rawalpindi that a number of houses were under surveillance and about to be raided, including the one we were in; so we all packed up and left immediately, and the criminals ended up raiding the house—now empty—just two days later.

The second time I almost fell into the hands of the enemies was just a few months later, after a brother who had been in the house we were staying in was captured at Karachi airport as he attempted to board an international flight. Although those in charge of travel and logistics feared the worst when the brother in question failed to make contact with them at the appointed time, and as a precaution immediately ordered the evacuation of the three safe houses the brother knew about, procrastination and a lack of coordination led to the three houses not being cleared of their occupants in time despite the advance warning, and after interrogating the brother and extracting information from him , the Pakistani security apparatuses mounted an operation.

Fortunately for me and the brothers with me, our house was not the first to be raided (this may be because the brother didn't tell them about it in the first place). Instead, they mounted a night raid on a related house (which I had also stayed at previously), where they were able to capture several brothers. Fortunately for us, one of the brothers in that house managed to escape by jumping from a second floor window, and—again fortunately—he knew the house we were in and arrived just before sunrise and knocked at the door. He told us what had happened and said we had to leave immediately, because our house was known to some of the brothers who had just been captured, and it might be next on the list. So we immediately got into the car, and as we turned onto the main road just a minute or two's drive from the house, we saw a convoy of about 10 police vehicles at the side of the road, waiting to make their move. We later learned that the police had arrived at the house a mere 8 or 9 minutes after our departure, and that they had with them one of the brothers they had captured from the first house, who had given them directions to our house under duress.

So those were the close calls I had with the police and intelligence apparatuses, and from which I emerged unscathed by the Grace of Allah alone.

Resurgence: In the context of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, what is the likelihood of the Islamic Emirate returning to power in Afghanistan in the near future?

Adam: From my vantage point, the prospects look good; the Taliban already hold large swathes of territory in the south and east, and the Jihad is steadily gaining momentum in the north, west and center, and all the indicators are pointing to the likelihood of the return of the Islamic Emirate bigger, better and stronger than ever before: soon, with Allah's permission.

Resurgence: What are the geo-political implications of the return of the Islamic Emirate for the region (specifically Pakistan) and the Muslim world generally?

Adam: I think Pakistan—specifi-



> Pakistan—**specifically the regime**—will have a lot of accounting to do for its repeated betrayals of the Mujahideen and the dirty game it has played for the past 30 years vis-à-vis the Afghan Jihad.

cally the regime—will have a lot of accounting to do for its repeated betrayals of the Mujahideen and the dirty game it has played for the past 30 years vis-à-vis the Afghan Jihad. As for the region and Muslim world in general, I expect the triumphant return of the Islamic Emirate—Allah willing—to be a big morale booster and inspiration for Islamic resistance and Jihad movements everywhere. And Allah knows best.

Resurgence: The Pakistani establishment and its American masters were recently rocked by a daring attempt by commissioned officers of the Pakistan Navy (under the command of al-Qa'eda in the Subcontinent) to attack ships of America and its allies on the high seas. We'd appreciate it if you could offer our readers a brief evaluation of this operation.

Adam: I believe this operation is a real game changer, and has highlighted some of the enemies' poorly hidden vulnerabilities and weaknesses. A number of things stand out about the operation in this context:

—The fact that naval ships and installations of America and its allies were to be targeted. This is a terrifying development for the West and its regional allies, because it shows that the Mujahideen mean what they say when they call for attacks on the maritime interests of the enemy states, and that it's just a matter of time before the lions of Allah make good on their threats and carry out a new Pearl Harbor, with all that entails in terms of devastating consequences for what is euphemistically called "international stability" (read Crusader hegemony).

—The fact that the Pakistani military was quick to cover up the true nature and details of the operation. While the West was terrified by the prospect of attacks on its Achilles heel—its navies and international shipping—the Pakistani military was more terrified at the prospect of the lucrative "strategic alliance" between it and America being dashed to pieces by news that American ships and interests were going to be targeted by Pakistani naval officers using the same weapons and warships the West had provided to Pakistan for the purpose of protecting its interests in the region; and so the Pakistani military tried to impose a blackout on the operation. This is despite the fact that Allah didn't decree the operation to be brought to completion; so can you imagine what would have happened had the operation gone ahead as planned? May Allah destroy the power of the unbelievers and apostates and destroy their "strategic alliances."

—The fact that the operation was not discovered until the actual execution of the plan had begun. This shows the weakness of the Pakistani intelligence establishment, which is plagued by corruption and fundamental flaws just like the rest of the Pakistani bureaucracy. And it shows the vulnerability of even the most sensitive government, military and foreign installations in Pakistan.

—The fact that serving officers of a branch of the Pakistani military were behind the operation. This may well be the most dramatic and surprising rebellion within the Pakistani defense establishment since the coup attempt of Brigadier Mustansir Billa, Major General Zahirul Islam Abbasi and other senior officers in 1995 and the attempts by Air Force technicians to eliminate Pervez Musharraf in the early 2000s. In fact, I think it tops all of those attempts in terms of its sheer scope and ambition and the far-reaching implications it has for Pakistan's international relations and foreign and domestic security.

—The simplicity and practicality of the plan—i.e. the use of domestic weaponry and machinery to attack targets of the Crusaders, Zionists and their





June 3, 2014: Former Pakistani Army Chief, (Retd.) General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani arrives onboard an American warship by a helicopter. The purpose of this visit was a meeting with a high-ranking American military official. Left: A Mujahid brother is monitoring the American warship and the movement of the former Army Chief on the computer screen of the missile control system installed on the Pakistani warship.



> **"These naval officers are real icebreakers who have opened the way for other defiant heroes to execute similar operations."**

allies—and the ease with which it could be adopted and imitated by others serving in all branches of the military, not just the Pakistani military but also other militaries in the region and world.

Suffice it to say that these naval officers are real icebreakers who have opened the way for other defiant heroes to execute similar operations. These heroes of Islam weren't members of al-Qa'eda when they joined the military; they only joined the Mujahideen after discovering for themselves the disgraceful and despicable truth about the so-called Muslim armies which claim to be working for the interest of Allah's religion and defense of the Ummah but are actually no more than pawns in the not-so-great game played by the enemies of Islam. And we know that there are thousands of others like these officers in all corners of the region and world who are experiencing the same awakening and searching for the right way to atone for the years and months they knowingly or unknowingly spent in the service of the Crusaders and their agents; and what path of atonement could possibly be better than the one these courageous officers took? May Allah accept it from them and transform their past and future sins into good deeds.

I ask Allah to accept the martyrs of this operation and free its captives, and to bless their efforts and make them an inspiration for others, and to give all those who toiled day and night on this operation and worked for it to succeed their reward in full. Shaykh Abdullah Azzam—may Allah accept him—says in his book "*Fee Khidamm al-Ma'rakah*" (In the Sea of Battle),

"Victory in battles, for which souls hunger, decreases the reward:

﴿وَأُخْرَى تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

'And also (He will give you) another (favor) which you love, help from Allah (against your enemies) and a victory near at hand. And give glad tidings to the believers.' (As-Saff, Ayat 13)

"And in the *Saheeh* of Muslim:

﴿مَا مِنْ غَازِيَةٍ، أَوْ سَرِيَّةٍ، تَغْزُو فَتَغْنَمُ وَتَسْلَمُ، إِلَّا كَانُوا قَدْ تَعَجَّلُوا ثُلُثَيْ أُجُورِهِمْ، وَمَا مِنْ غَازِيَةٍ، أَوْ سَرِيَّةٍ، تُخْفِقُ وَتُصَابُ، إِلَّا تَمَّ أُجُورُهُمْ﴾

'No military detachment or raiding party carries out a raid in which it takes booty and returns safely without those who took part in it receiving two-thirds of their reward in advance; and no military detachment or raiding party fails and suffers casualties without those in it receiving their reward in full.'"



There is no shame or harm in failing: rather, the real shame and loss is in not trying. Perhaps history will eventually remember this operation the same way it remembers the first attempt to bring down the World Trade Center.

The Hadeeth that Shaykh Abdullah 'Azzam mentioned reminds us that the nature of warfare is that it has its ups and downs and seesaws between victory and defeat and success and failure, and that there is no shame or harm in failing: rather, the real shame and loss is in not trying. The story of Jihad is a story of successes followed by failures and failures followed by successes, and who knows: perhaps history will eventually remember this operation the same way it remembers the first attempt to bring down the World Trade Center.

Resurgence: One of the targets of the operation was the Indian Navy. How does India fit into the picture? Or to put it another way, why is India now a primary target of al-Qa'eda?

Adam: India today is a major regional partner of the global Zionist/Crusader coalition, almost to the extent of being a full-fledged member of International Unbelief. Its close ties with Israel and America are not a secret; and more recently it has even buried the hatchet with long term rival China, thus paving the way for a new regional alignment against Islam and Muslims. Yet despite it marching in step with all these international powers, India still has the gall to call itself part of the "Non-Aligned Movement"!

So when India's open alliance with the major global enemies of the Ummah is combined with the ongoing oppression and slaughter of Muslims in Occupied Kashmir and various Indian provinces and the deep-seated anti-Islamic sentiments held by much of the Indian ruling elite (which is currently dominated by Hindutva facists like the newly elected prime minister and notorious butcher of Gujarati Muslims Narendra Modi), it becomes clear that the Mujahideen have no choice but to make targeting India one of their most urgent priorities, at least as long as it pursues these antagonistic policies and continues to engage in and condone the persecution, murder and rape of Muslims and occupation of their lands.



The Mujahideen have no choice but to make targeting India one of their most urgent priorities

The Hindu hate crimes which have been committed against Muslims in Assam, Gujarat, Kashmir and elsewhere at the behest of the Zionists and Crusaders—or at least with their tacit support—must be avenged, and those behind them shall not go unpunished, with Allah's help.

Resurgence: The plight of Islam and Muslims under the brutal and repressive Indian-and-American-backed secular nationalist regime of Bangladesh is another tragedy facing the Ummah today. What—as you see it—is the way forward for our brothers who are working to establish the rule of Islam in that part of the world?

Adam: The way forward is *Da'wah* and Jihad. The way forward is to be steadfast in proclaiming the truth about this despicable Atatürkist regime, exposing its crimes and treason and informing the Muslim Bangladeshi public of their Islamic rights and obligations, while at the same time using all legitimate means to combat the regime, especially military action against its international backers like America and India until they abandon their support of these criminal secularist enemies of Islam who rule Bangladesh, some of whom are on record as belittling the Hajj as a waste of time and money better spent elsewhere! People like this have no place in Muslim society, much less as rulers of Islamic countries. So let's spare no effort to excise the secularist cancer from the body of the Ummah, and let's be prepared to offer all sorts of sacrifices on the path of Jihad, the path to freedom, honor and dignity.

Resurgence: Coming back to more personal questions, some so-called experts and analysts in Western media and intelligence circles claim that you are the founder and/or head of as-Sahab Foundation for Media Production. Does this claim have any substance?

Adam: Oh, you must mean the same experts and analysts who declared al-Qa'eda to be all but dead after the martyrdom of Shaykh Usama bin Ladin and the "success" of peaceful protest during the Arab Spring uprisings! The fact is, I am neither the founder of as-Sahab nor have I ever been its head. I didn't even start working with as-Sahab until 2002, when we were in Karachi. In fact, I didn't even see any of as-Sahab's early productions—like "The Destruction of the Destroyer USS Cole"—until after exiting Afghanistan following the occupation. So don't believe everything you read or hear about me or the Mujahideen in general.

Resurgence: Apparently, some people even assume that you are behind Resurgence magazine!

Adam: That's also totally baseless. The concept of Resurgence was conceived by the brothers in Jama'at Qa'eda al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent, who are also its producers and publishers. The editor-in-chief (Brother Hassaan Yusuf) is a member of al-Qa'eda in the Subcontinent. Most of the articles are written by brothers from the new branch or translated by them. Other than expressing my opinion on various matters when asked for it (and sometimes without being asked!), my only contribution to the magazine thus far has been my article "Besiege

Them!" in issue #1 and now this interview.

Resurgence: When and why did you decide to start appearing in videos for as-Sahab?

Adam: I had been doing translation and voiceover work for as-Sahab since joining it in 2002, but the decision to start appearing in videos was only taken in mid-2004, when my name and picture were made public by the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and I became the subject of international attention. The director of as-Sahab asked me soon after FBI director Robert Mueller's press conference if I would be interested in doing an interview, to which I agreed without hesitation, both because there was a lot I wanted to say to the Muslims as well as the enemies and also because I wanted to get back at the Americans for publicizing my identity and make them regret it. I had known the Americans were interested in me since at least 1999, after a letter I had written and emailed using a computer belonging to Abu 'Aa'id al-Filisteeni (Khalil al-Deek) was discovered by them following his arrest in Peshawar and extradition to Jordan, but I think if the Americans hadn't done what they did and made their investigation public, I may never have agreed to do the interview (or even been asked to do it in the first place). All the same, I thought it best at the time not to appear with my face uncovered, both for security reasons as well as to add an element of mystery and uncertainty about the identity of the man behind the mask. The anonymity had the added benefit of exposing some of the so-called experts and analysts we were just talking about, like that genius Yossef Bodansky[7]—a bigoted and virulently Zionist Jew with a fertile imagination and a tendency to play fast and loose with the facts—who was unequivocal and adamant in his insistence that "Azzam the American" was in fact an Arab-American!

[7] Know your enemy: "Yossef Bodansky (born in Israel [Occupied Palestine]) is an Israeli-American political scientist who served as Director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare of the US House of Representatives from 1988 to 2004. He is also Director of Research of the International Strategic Studies Association and has been a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). In the 1980s, he served as a senior consultant for the Department of Defense and the Department of State…Bodansky is also a senior editor for the Defense and Foreign Affairs group of publications and a contributor to the International Military and Defense Encyclopedia and is on the Advisory Council of The Intelligence Summit. Bodansky's numerous articles have been published in Global Affairs, Jane's Defense Weekly, Defense and Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy and other periodicals." (Wikipedia)

Among his books:

Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America (1999, 2001, Random House).

Islamic Anti-Semitism as a Political Instrument (1999, 2000, ACPR Publications and Tammuz Publishers).

The High Cost of Peace: How Washington's Middle East Policy Left America Vulnerable to Terrorism (2002, Random House).

The Secret History of the Iraq War (2004, HarperCollins).

Chechen Jihad: Al Qaeda's Training Ground and the Next Wave of Terror (2007, HarperCollins).

Adam adds: I happened to read Bodansky's New York Times Bestseller "Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America" while I was in Qandahar. Rather than being the well-researched account it was purported to be, I found it to be a sensationalistic work severely deficient of hard facts and better suited for the fantasy section of any self-respecting library or bookstore, regardless of it being labeled "non-fiction." The book was essentially 90 percent lies, rumors and speculation and 10 percent exaggeration, and included nonsense about al-Qa'eda's supposedly close ties with the regimes considered by America to be state sponsors of terrorism—particularly the regime in Iran, which Bodansky claimed was the biggest supporter of Shaykh Usama—as well as tall tales of Shaykh Usama regularly traveling from Afghanistan to various regional capitals in his "private jet" to coordinate and gather support for his war on America (I suppose we should be grateful that at least Bodansky didn't claim Shaykh Usama had a "flying carpet"!). If I'm not mistaken, his book may also be the source of the reports about the miles of modern, fully-equipped, climate-controlled underground bunkers and tunnels starting at al-Qa'eda's base in Tora Bora and extending deep into Pakistan (in reality—as I heard from Shaykh Sayf al-'Aadil— there were a just a few small room-sized caves which were used for storage of weapons and ammunition and nothing else).

Let's spare no effort to excise the secularist cancer from the body of the Ummah!


Rajib Haider


Shafiul Islam


Avijit Roy

I ask Allah to reward the brothers at Inspire—and al-Malahem Media in general—for their perseverance in the face of the Crusader campaign.



Resurgence: Why did you choose "'Azzam" as your nickname when you began appearing in videos?

Adam: Actually, I wasn't the one who chose it. What happened is that after we did the interview, I wrote to the director of as-Sahab and asked him (also for security reasons) not to use the only nickname by which I was known up until then, which was "Abu Suhayb"; and I asked him to use either my real name or another nickname. As he later explained to me, he didn't know how to write my real name in Arabic, so he decided to use an alias, and because he remembered that I was a fan of Shaykh Abdullah 'Azzam (may Allah accept him), he chose "'Azzam," which was fine by me.

Resurgence: Was your appearance in as-Sahab the exclusive decision of its director, or were others involved in the process?

Adam: In al-Qa'eda, very few decisions—particularly sensitive ones—are taken unilaterally and without prior consultation. As I understand it, my interview was sent to both Shaykh Usama bin Ladin (may Allah accept him) and Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri (may Allah preserve him) for review and approval before release. Then a few months later, Shaykh Ayman himself—may Allah preserve him—wrote to me and said he had seen the interview and liked it, and he encouraged me to start producing messages on a regular basis.

Resurgence: You contributed to an issue of the well-known magazine Inspire, which is produced by our brothers in al-Malahem, the media wing of al-Qa'eda in the Arabian Peninsula. Inspire has definitely been an inspiration to us here at Resurgence, but what we wanted to ask you is: how did your contribution come about?

Adam: What happened is that the martyr—as we reckon him to be—Shaykh Anwar al-Awlaki (may Allah have mercy on him) got in touch with me in early 2011 (i.e. a few months before his martyrdom) and asked me to contribute to Inspire; and he suggested an interview to start. We did the interview, and Inspire advertised it, but Allah decreed that Shaykh Anwar and Brother Sameer Khan were martyred before the interview could be published; and I think since much of the interview had become out-of-date by the time the brothers behind the magazine got things up and running again, they opted to just publish some extracts from it.



The Mujahid is rewarded even for the small things he does, like crossing a valley or doing something which angers the disbelievers or spending even a small amount of his wealth in Allah's path. This should motivate each one of us to play his part and do the job he has been given, even if what he is doing sometimes seems insignificant.

I ask Allah to reward the brothers at Inspire—and al-Malahem Media in general—for their perseverance in the face of the Crusader campaign against them and their preservation of the legacy of Shaykh Anwar and Brother Sameer (may Allah have mercy on them both) against all expectations and predictions to the contrary, and I look forward to collaborating with them again in the near future, Allah willing.

Resurgence: Amongst your teachers and instructors over the years, who has inspired or influenced you most?

Adam: I think those I have been most inspired or affected by were by and large the scholars and students of knowledge, whether those whom I studied under, like Shaykh Abu Hafs al-Mauritani, Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir and Shaykh Abu Yusuf al-Mauritani (may Allah accept him), or those I consulted with in matters of *'aqeedah* and *fiqh* and from whose *fatwas* I have benefited, like Shaykh Abu al-Waleed al-Ansaari, Shaykh Esa and Shaykh Mansoor al-Shami (may Allah accept him), as well as those who I came to know later on and work with and consult not only in matters of religion but also in matters of media and policy, like Shaykh 'Attiyatullah and Shaykh Abu Yahya—may Allah accept them—and our beloved Ameer Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri—may Allah preserve him—who has never been sparing nor stingy in offering me encouragement and advice as well as constructive criticism whenever needed.

I think Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Suri also deserves mention in this context. Another person really dear to me and close to my heart is Shaykh Ibn al-Shaykh al-Leebi (may Allah accept him), the ameer of Khalden, although he wasn't really one of my teachers, but he was a really nice person who I looked up to; and the same goes for Abu Zubaidah, Shaykh Abu Hafs al-Misri (may Allah have mercy on him), Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and a number of other Shaykhs, commanders and brothers too many to mention here .

And last but not least, I have to make special mention of the director of as-Sahab, who has taught me a lot about media work.

Resurgence: You are *mashaa Allah* active in terms of your media-related activities. Some brothers say that the daily routines, frequent periods of inactivity and monotony and other challenges one faces in the land of Jihad can sometimes lead to a lack of energy and drive. Where does your motivation come from?"

Adam: I think the answer is hidden in the question! It's the urge to meet and defeat the very challenges you alluded to and the desire to inspire and encourage the Ummah in general and the Mujahideen in particular which plays a major part in motivating me to do the work I do; although honestly speaking, I feel that I have not been active enough when it comes to my media output.

Another even more important thing which should be a driving factor for every Mujahid and Muhajir is the not-so-small matter of the *ajr* and *thawaab* (reward) which Allah has promised for those who answer the call of Jihad and go out in the path of Allah. Allah says:

﴿مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطَئُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

"It is not for the people of al-Madinah and the Bedouins around them to remain behind Allah's Messenger (when fighting in Allah's Paths) nor to prefer their own lives to his life. That is because they suffer neither thirst nor fatigue nor hunger in the Path of Allah, nor take any step which angers the disbelievers, nor inflict any injury upon an enemy, without it being written to their credit as a deed of righteousness. Allah does not cause the reward of the doers of good to be lost. Nor do they spend anything that may be spent, small or great, nor do they cross a valley, without having it written to their credit, so that Allah may reward them

with the best of what they have done." (At-Tawbah, Ayahs 120-121)

So the Mujahid is rewarded even for the small things he does, like crossing a valley or doing something which angers the disbelievers or spending even a small amount of his wealth in Allah's path, and this in and of itself should be a big morale booster for each and every one of us, and should motivate each of us to play his part and do the job he has been given even if what he is doing sometimes seems insignificant or unimportant to him. It may look that way to you, but its value in the eyes of Allah—*subhaanahu wa ta'aala*—is great.

As for the problem of monotony, inactivity and lack of excitement, I think some brothers, especially new brothers, might face this problem because they come to the land of Jihad expecting to spend most of their time engaged in battle with the enemy, since all that they see in the Mujahideen's media are military operations, and so they imagine that the Mujahideen are in combat mode 24 hours a day, seven days a week; but after arriving, these brothers often find something else together: they find themselves experiencing a lot of down time and a lot of time waiting for an opportunity to take part in an operation. The fact is, actual combat represents a small part of the experience of going out in the path of Allah. Rather, much of a Mujahid's time is taken up by Ribaat—i.e. being stationed or garrisoned on the frontiers of Islam or in the land of Jihad—and this requires patience and perseverance. The renewer of Jihad Shaykh Abdullah Azzam—may Allah have mercy on him—says about the importance of patience in Jihad and the reward of the Murabit (one who performs Ribaat):

"Jihad is based in the first place on patience, and there is never any Jihad without patience, and someone without patience can never perform Jihad, and that's why the Lord of the worlds said, ***'O you who believe, have patience and exhort yourselves to patience…'*** *(Aal 'Imraan, Ayah 200) Don't merely have patience, but also exhort your bored, weary selves—which almost ooze boredom and weariness—to have patience. Be patient, and if you become bored, exhort yourselves to patience* ***'…and perform Ribaat and fear Allah so that you may be successful'*** *(Aal 'Imraan, Ayah 200).*

"Jihad is based on patience; and the person who lets his soul follow its desires and can't bear to be patient cannot perform Jihad, because in order to prepare for a single battle which will be over in one or two days or at most ten, you will need to do Ribaat for ten months! The battle of Kalafgan[8] lasted 45 minutes, but preparations for it took several months. So you need Ribaat, and that's why there are Murabits on the frontiers. And Ribaat is difficult for people, and that's why one day in Ribaat is worth a thousand normal days, and one day in it is better than the entire world and everything in it: […]'**A day spent in Ribaat in the path of Allah is better than a thousand days spent elsewhere.'** *[Narrated by an-Nasaa'i—Hadeeth Hasan]. This is why Siddiq Hasan Khan[9] says that the person who eats and sleeps in Jihad and Ribaat is better than the person who fasts and prays but stays in his country. […] And then:* **'A day of Ribaat in the path of Allah is better than everything on which the sun has set and risen'** *(Narrated by Muslim); and:* **'A day of Ribaat is better than the world and everything on it.'** *(Narrated by al-Bukhari). […] And if*

[8] Kalafgan: Place in northern Afghanistan on the road between the city of Taloqan and Badakhshan province.
[9] Siddiq Hasan Khan (1832-1890): a well-known Indian Muslim scholar.



In order to prepare for a single battle which will be over in one or two days or at most ten, you will need to do Ribaat for ten months!

To fellow Muslims I say

Even if you are among those who have lagged behind the caravan and haven't gone to battle against the enemies of Islam, you should still expect the battle to eventually come to you, whether you like it or not. While our enemies are evil and depraved, they aren't stupid, and when choosing the targets of their aggression, they usually start with the weakest links in the chain, which are the peaceful and pacifistic types.

you die while in Ribaat, your deeds continue to increase for you until the Day of Judgement. There are some categories of people whose deeds never come to an end. One of them is the Murabit. The pen continues to flow for him until Allah brings forth the people on the Day of Judgement. What greater bounty could there be than this? [….] **'A day of Ribaat in the path of Allah is better than a month of fasting and praying; and whoever dies during it (i.e. Ribaat) will be shielded from the *fitnah* (trial) of the grave, and his deed will increase until the Day of Judgement'** *(Narrated by al-Tirmidhi—Saheeh). So you could die here from dysentery, and it would be better for you, because your deed will continue to run [increase] until the Day of Judgement." (From al-Hijrah wal-I'daad—Migration and Preparation—by Shaykh Abdullah Azzam)*

So if you're still here in the land of Jihad despite all the obstacles and difficulties, that means you have—by the grace of Allah—the patience necessary to be a Mujahid and Murabit; and if we keep in mind the rewards Allah has promised for even seemingly insignificant deeds in Jihad, and keep in mind that our mere presence in this land (not to mention the things we do here) enrages the Kuffaar, and that there is a reward for enraging them, and if we remember that our fatigue and weariness and even our sleep will be rewarded if we have the right intention, and that we still deserve a reward even if we are prevented by circumstances beyond our control or orders from the ameer from being with the Mujahideen or taking part in battles, I think we should have no problem in keeping our spirits up and maintaining sufficient motivation, regardless of the challenges we will almost certainly face. May Allah guide us all to serve Him in the best manner, and may He overlook our sins and shortcoming and grant us our reward in full.

Resurgence: As we bring this discussion to a close, do you have any other advice to give to Muslims in general and the Mujahideen in particular?

Adam: To fellow Muslims I say: even if you are among those who have lagged behind the caravan and haven't gone to battle against the enemies of Islam, you should still expect the battle to eventually come to you, whether you like it or not. While our enemies are evil and depraved, they aren't stupid, and when choosing the targets of their aggression, they usually start with the weakest links in the chain, which are the peaceful and pacifistic types. An attitude of complacency and nonresistance in the face of clear and present wrongs, threats and dangers serves no one but the enemy, and that's why everyone of us must be prepared to fight today rather than tomorrow. So hurry up and join the caravan.

As for my brothers the Mujahideen, those already discharging the duty of defending Islam and its followers, I say to them: let us examine ourselves on a regular basis to make sure our intentions are sound and our actions correct; let us make sure that we are fighting for the sake of Allah, not for the sake of ameer, group, temporal power or worldly gain, because these things are temporary and will soon pass: only Allah is permanent and will remain. Let us understand our place within the Ummah and our duties and responsibilities towards it; let us show mercy and kindness towards the weak and helpless; let us display tolerance for our fellow Muslims and Mujahideen whatever our differences with them and however much we feel they have let us down; let us beware of the deviant *Takfeeri* methodology which continues to rear its ugly head every now and again in some of the theaters of jihad; let us beware of making *Takfeer* of Muslims or Mujahideen or deeming their blood, wealth and honor to be permissible without right; let us beware of turning into "Jihadi supremacists" (if you get my drift); let us show respect for our 'Ulama, leaders and elders and let us abide by their rulings, advice and instructions except in



Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Dagestani
(may Allah have mercy on him)

Warm greetings and a message of support and appreciation to all the brothers in the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus, bearer of the banner of Jihad against the resurgent Russian empire, and in particular to their virtuous ameer Shaykh Abu Muhammad al Dagestani.

clear disobedience to Allah; let us adhere to and comply with the principles of Shari'ah and justice in all our actions and dealings; and let us work towards unity on a sound basis of *taqwa* and Islamic precepts, because if we can't unify our own ranks, how can we expect the Ummah to unify itself?!

That's my message to the Mujahideen in general. I also have some special messages I'd like to send before we end:

-Warm greetings and a message of support and appreciation to all the brothers in the Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus, bearer of the banner of Jihad against the resurgent Russian empire, and in particular to their virtuous ameer Shaykh Abu Muhammad Dagestani, may Allah preserve him. We ask Allah to guide their footsteps, unite their ranks and give them victory over their enemy and the enemy of Islam and Muslims.

-A message of support and appreciation to the champions of Libya who have united in battle against the apostate and American agent Khalifah Haftar and his band of mercenaries and the other militias associated with the Municipal Council of Tobrok which has recently been masquerading as a national government; may Allah accept it from our brothers and grant them continued success and unity, and may He crown their achievements with a decisive victory (Allah permitting) followed by the establishment of an authentic Islamic system free from the deviations of both the extremists as well as the so-called "centrists". As for the apostate Haftar and his CIA goons, our message for them is: either go back home to Virginia and stay out of Libya's internal affairs, or prepare to meet the fate of Qaddhafi and Abdul Sattar Abu Risha at the hands of Libya's heroic Mujahideen and revolutionaries, Allah willing. We also warn Haftar's Western and regional backers to end their meddling and interference immediately, because their continued meddling will give the Mujahideen of Libya more than enough justification to retaliate at a time and place of their choosing.

-A message of solidarity with our Muslim brothers in Egypt in general and the Sinai in particular in their battle with the Taghoot Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and the Americanized Egyptian Army and security forces he commands. We tell our brothers: don't let this criminal Pharaoh and his minions rest for so much as a second, because should they be allowed to enjoy success in achieving "stability", it would spell disaster not just for Egypt, but for the region as a whole. And don't forget to make the Jewish occupiers the main target of your operations, because nothing upsets and harms the Egyptian pharaocracy more than attacks on its Jewish backers.

-A message of solidarity with our Muslim brothers in Yemen as they close ranks to face down the Rafidite Houthi occupation which is threatening the integrity and the very identity of the Land of Faith and Wisdom. May Allah grant our brothers steadfastness and perseverance in the task ahead of them, and may He bless the unity of the defiant Muslim tribes of Yemen with their devoted sons, the Mujahideen of al-Qa'eda/Ansaar al-Shariah, and make this unity a permanent one which will lead to a new era free—Allah willing—from the interference of international powers and their regional proxies in the internal affairs of Islam and Muslims.

-And finally, I would like to remind my brothers the Mujahideen in particular and Muslims in general that despite it having been pushed from the headlines first by the *fitnah* and now by the Crusaders' declared war on the Islamic State group, and despite the setbacks it has suffered, there is still a legitimate defensive Jihad under way in Syria against Bashar al-Asad and his family, allies and backers, who are laying waste to the Levant and persecuting its people with an unmatched brutality; and this is just one of the reasons that **the Jihad against the regime in Damascus remains the most important battle for the Muslim Ummah in decades;** another reason is the fact that the Jews and their Crusader patrons have for decades relied on this regime

as their first line of defense, and therefore, its collapse (Allah willing) will be an important milestone on the road to the liberation of Palestine and al-Quds from the Zionist occupation; and by the same token, the defeat of the Syrian revolution would be a devastating blow for the entire Ummah and likely shore up Zionist-Crusader domination of the region for years and perhaps decades to come. That's why it is the duty of every Muslim to do everything he can to support this blessed Jihad until the toppling of the demonic and depraved Asad regime is achieved and the Islamic system is established in Syria, and that's why we must get our priorities straight, reset our compass, regain our bearings and refocus our efforts towards defending and supporting our brothers in Syria in their heroic and fateful struggle against the Nusayrites, Rafidites, Ba'athists and their agents; and we must not allow ourselves to be fooled by the enemies' desperate attempts to confuse, distract and divert us from this crucial and decisive battle by drawing us into peripheral battles here and there or beguiling us with schemes, shell games and sleight of hand which makes the convincing illusions pulled off by Pharoah's sorcerers look positively amateur in comparison.

In closing, I again express my thanks to the brothers at Resurgence and ask Allah to make them and their magazine painful thorns in the side of the Zionists and Crusaders and their Hindu and apostate allies. Wassalaamu 'Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakaatuh.

Resurgence: May Allah reward you greatly for sparing the time to share your beneficial insights on a wide range of issues with our readers. In closing, we pray to Allah that he accepts our Jihad and that he guides Mujahideen all over the world to keep their efforts focused on the primary threats facing Islam and Muslims, Ameen! ■



We must not allow ourselves to be fooled by the enemies' desperate attempts to confuse, distract and divert us from this crucial and decisive battle by drawing us into peripheral battles here and there or beguiling us with schemes, shell games and sleight of hand which makes the convincing illusions pulled off by Pharoah's sorcerers look positively amateur in comparison."



...Then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace,

of the Prophets,

the Siddiqin,

the Martyrs,

and the Righteous.

And how excellent these companions are!

(Al – Quran: 4:69)